DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 023 771

UD 007 424

By-Adams, William T., Ed.

The Monte Vista Story: an Evaluation Report on the Monte Vista Project. Interviews with Basic Instructors.

Colorado Univ., Boulder. Extension Division.

Report No-UCED-R-411965-A

Pub Date 65

Note-57p.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$2.95

Descriptors-Community Problems, *Economically Disadvantaged, Economic Disadvantagement, Educational Problems, Federal Programs, Instructional Aids, *Interviews, Minority Role, *Poverty Programs, Spanish Americans, Unemployment, *Volunteer Training, Welfare Problems

Identifiers-Colorado, Monte Vista, *VISTA Project, Volunteers in Service to America

To be used as teaching aids, these interviews were developed in a training program for VISTA volunteers in Monte Vista, Colorado, during the summer of 1965. The instructors, whose comments constitute a major scope of the document were mothers, ex-delinquents, school dropouts, and young unwed mothers from the poverty area. It is felt that this technique can encourage the trainees to study the interview process as well as to learn about the life of the disadvantaged. (For the full evaluation of the training program, see UD 005652) (EF)

THE MONTE VISTA STORY

INSTITUTE OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

Program of Research on Social and Cultural Process
Action Research in Socialization Processes Project

REPORT NUMBER 411965-A

ED023771

INTERVIEWS WITH BASIC INSTRUCTOR

A REPORT ON A VISTA TRAINING PROGRAM CONDUCTED BY EXTENSION DIVISION, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

~~[illegible]~~
07424E

THE MONTE VISTA STORY

An Evaluation Report
on the
MONTE VISTA PROJECT

A Training Program for

VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE TO AMERICA

June 19 - September 10, 1965

by
Howard Higman
Robert Hunter
William T. Adams

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Interviews with Basic Instructors

Edited by William T. Adams

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO EXTENSION DIVISION

Action Research on Socialization Processes Project
Program of Research on Social and Cultural Processes
Institute of Behavioral Science
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado
1965

UD 007 424
ED023771

Report Number: 411965 - A

Preface

The interviews in this record are to be used as teaching aids. They were developed in the training program for the VISTA volunteers in Monte Vista, Colorado during the summer of 1965, which was conducted by the Extension Division of the University of Colorado.

Basic instructors were used as teachers in the VISTA training. The reason for using the people from the poverty areas was to provide the class with an opportunity to learn directly from the poor. Basic instructors that were used included mothers, ex-delinquents, school dropouts, and young unwed mothers. When the basic instructors were hired, they were told they would be teachers at the school. Each was paid and each played a new role. No preliminary briefing was done. They taught spontaneously.

If any one word can be used to describe the content of these sessions, it must be spontaneity. The basic format of this instruction was the interview. The students were to get two things: content about poverty, youth problems, life of the disadvantaged, and minority status in an affluent society on the one hand; and, on the other hand, a demonstration of interviewing -- individual as well as group.

After the basic instructor left, the interviewer analyzed the sessions. He pointed out the significant content, the interview process, the points of insight, threat, and the need for support. A discussion was held with the students. In these teaching records, the students are encouraged to study the content and interview process. Class instruction is encouraged. Close analyses of these two teaching records will help the student gain a great deal of insight into these two subjects.

While a large part of the interview does focus on revealing feelings and personal information about the basic instructors themselves, an even larger part is included on general reactions to such things as poverty, unemployment, the community, minority status, welfare, deviancy, and education. They talk about the rural areas and the very limited opportunity system. They talk about themselves -- their lives, hopes, and despairs. In so doing, the interviewer is careful to guarantee that their privacy is not violated. They have been told to stop if anything becomes painful.

The records of this public teaching have been changed in everyway to guarantee the protection of people in the Valley. All names have been changed, and in some cases, specific dates, places, and content. However, for the most part, the interviews are exactly as related in the classroom. The basic instructors knew the teaching would be public. They readily consented.

The Setting. Monte Vista is a town of some 3,500 inhabitants located near the banks of the Rio Grande River in the San Luis Valley in south central Colorado. It serves as a trading center for a large area comprising the highest irrigated agricultural district in the nation. Known as the potato capital of the West, Rio Grande County's production is the largest per farm in Colorado. A large migrant population arrives in mid-summer. The twon has a large permanent Spanish-American population living largely in poverty. Many of the houses are made of logs and mud. The section of the town, unincorporated, from which these basic instructors come is called Lariat.

The first teaching record is an interview with two women from Lariat: a mother and her daughter. The mother had come from the hospital only that morning after a two-week illness. Both women have large families, are often on welfare, were anxious to be teachers, and did teach the volunteers a great deal.

The second teaching record is an interview with a young man who had struggled and succeeded in the community. He is articulate, bright, and forthright.

Boulder, Colorado **William T. Adams**

Adams: When you hear us talk this morning, listen, and think about what we're talking about. Then become as involved with us as you can. Fred Carcia and I met each other about six weeks ago. We taught in the first VISTA Program. Let's start today, Fred, by your telling a little bit about yourself. How old you are? And where you live? And what you do now?

Garcia: I am 27 years of age. I am a custodian by day and try to be a policeman by night. This is just part time. I live right next to the big playground that was cleared by the first VISTA group. I have lived in this section of Lariat all my life.

Adams: When you say that you "try" to be a policeman, what do you mean?

Garcia: Well, I've had some difficulties. I arrest somebody and he comes out and tears me down because I'm doing my duty as a policeman. Here again, it's the Spanish people that have this ill feeling against me. It's not all of them. Don't get me wrong. It's just the ones that I've caught. It's just been two persons. It has bothered me quite a bit. But other than that, I've been working 16 hours a day and I don't have much time for anything else. I'm having a week off starting tomorrow.

Adams: How long ago did you become a policeman?

Garcia: Well, this was right after I met you, Tom. When the Police Academy started up in Denver, we sent one of the officers up there for a month. He came back and my cousin, Alfred, he went up and I'll be working for at least another month.

Adams: The point you brough out about being all of a sudden in a new situation, could we talk more about this. Obviously, you've been thinking a lot about it lately.

Garcia: Well, I was approached by the Chief of Police. I've been a special policeman for three years now and he asked if I would be interested in working this extra month full time and he put it up to me as my convenience, which shift I could work it out better, so I suggested that I'd work from 8 to 4 in the morning and it went along pretty good. Later on it was catching up with me pretty bad so I asked to be transferred so I'd start working right after school until 12, which would give me all my sleep at once.

Adams: How did you feel about these two fellows you mentioned that seemed pretty angry with you when you arrested them, because it seemed to them that you had turned on them?

Garcia: Well, one of them, I think he's had me booked for a long time. We had an incident about eight years ago. He claimed that I and another buddy of mine hit him and kicked him and this and that. He brought this up again the other day, and made me so mad that I finally took my badge and my gun off and went into the cell with him. He's one of these that will just do nothing but talk. As I said before, I'm not very good at words and some of my actions speak louder than my words. I got mad and I went in there with him which I shouldn't have done. But he got me so riled up and teed off that I actually did this and after I got in there he pretended he was passed out. I dragged him out of the cell and I asked him, "Where 's all your big words and your actions now?" He was still passed out so I just put him back in and he woke up like a tiger and started all over again so I just ignored him.

Adams: Prior to being a policeman, what did you do?

Garcia: I've been a custodian at the schools since the first of March. Before that I've had all kinds of work, a couple of weeks with the railroad company, as a potato warehouse foreman. I've worked in a gas station, out in the fields, working with hay and potatoes, generally anything.

Adams: You've had all different kinds of jobs?

Adams: Fred, could you tell us a little bit about when you were growing up, how far you went in school, and things like that?

Garcia: Yes, I'm a graduate of Monte Vista High School. I graduated in 1957. I was offered a two-year scholarship to either B.Y.U. or Adams State which I never did take up. I got married right after that. We had family problems. My father and mother got separated right before I graduated, and that sort of broke me up. I didn't know which way to go so I decided I'd join the service and try to straighten myself up. My father wouldn't sign for me so I didn't get into the service at that time. Later on I got married and sort of just threw my education out the window. If I'd had some consultation at the time I probably could have still been going to school, but I didn't know till afterwards that the scholarship could be extended two years.

Adams: How did you do in school?

Garcia: Well, I'm not very bright, but I don't think I did very bad either. I had mostly C's and B's.

Adams: What did you like about school, Fred?

Garcia: Well, it was a combination of some of my friends being there and the sports I participated in. I really like this. I know for a fact if I hadn't been participating in sports I wouldn't have gone to high school.

Adams: That was the thing that held you there? Now yesterday we had four boys who talked with us. It was a very depressing kind of thing to talk with the four boys. Their feeling about school was that it wasn't much. Could you talk a little about what else you like in school? What were the boys with whom you grew up thinking about?

Garcia: Well, one of my neighbors, two houses from me; we both were in the same grade and we'd been going to school all along, right together. He was always a real good basketball player and therefore we had something in common; being neighbors living in the same area and taking sports together. Then again we had our letterman's club which had regular meetings. We had picnics and get-togethers and we were invited to have supper or a picnic or something by the letterman's club or one of the clubs in town. This always made me feel real good because I had hardly associated with the town before this. By living in Lariat, meant they didn't have much contact with us. Well they still don't, much contact or much of anything for ourselves. This surprised the heck out of me to see people either interested just for the sport's sake, or maybe just to have something to do, I don't know.

Adams: Being involved with the athletics put you in a position of having contact with the community. Did it give you other responsibilities? Did they expect more from you as a student?

Garcia: Well, they did. You had to have a certain amount of grades in order to participate. If you don't keep your grades up it doesn't matter if you're the best ball player they have. You're still out. You have to keep your grades up. But I think that by being engaged in sports I did have more responsibility for myself and for my fellow students than I think I would have had otherwise. Every time any little thing went on with the Spanish boys or girls, I was called into the principal's office to talk to him. I was called in maybe several times during one week, then it would slack off again. It depended what was going on. And I was always looked up to as a leader. I tried to straighten their problems out and I'd try to get them back into school.

Adams: How did you feel about this extra kind of responsibility?

Garcia: I didn't mind it at first but it got out of hand. Every little thing that happened, I was called in. I was slowing down on my school work, and I wouldn't sleep at night sometimes. This got kind of bad so I told the Superintendent-he was promoted then-that I wasn't my brother's keeper. That I'd take care of myself.

Adams: Could you talk a little bit about the kinds of problems that the kids had that you were expected to take care of?

Garcia: Oh, anywhere from joy-riding to kicking somebody in the hall. They just varied, it depended. Generally it was their behavior.

Adams: Did you resent this?

Garcia: No, as I said before, I was glad to help them. It went on for better than three years, so I guess I must have like it. Here again, I thought I was in a position where they might listen if I talked to them. It might have more success than if maybe the Superintendent, and they could talk to me--I could talk to them more freely and more relaxed than he could. Later on after he became principal he sort of set me aside to do this because of the time involved in it.

Adams: Did you feel that because you were pretty successful in sports that you got a special kind of treatment in school?

Garcia: Well, yes, I think to a great extent that is true. Of course it started since I was in the 9th grade. That fall I went out for football. I only weighed 108 pounds so I didn't quite made the 190 pound boys. But I took physical education the rest of the fall and during the winter I took up wrestling and I gained a little bit of weight, about 10 pounds through the year. But here again, being brought up in Lariat and the general feeling that people in other sections of town have about Lariat. They're supposed to be the meanest, and this and that. I've always been rough, even in play, that's just me, but I don't think that I've ever used this against anybody that we went to school with or that in the school they feared me or anything like this. We got along real good. There were some incidents that did arise, but none that we didn't handle.

Adams: You mentioned before when we were talking today about your family, that when you were getting ready to graduate, could you tell us about that?

Garcia: This was around March that I first knew about it. I knew there was some friction going on in the house with my parents, but I didn't pay too much attention and I was getting all ready for graduation, and my mom came in and talked to me and said she was leaving dad and was going to live with my sister in Pueblo. My mother and I have always been real close, more so than my father and I, and it seemed to me at the time, it was very hard for her to explain to me what had taken place, so I didn't question any further. My father, being not as close to me as my mother was, didn't being anything up, so this kept bothering and bothering me so I had to go out on my own and really find out what happened. The way it still stands in my mind--they were both at fault. I can't go one way or the other. This separation really took effect on me because I was so used to having my mother with me and having her in all my decisions that It broke me up with graduation right around the corner and my schooling just dropped.

Adams: When you mentioned you were closest to your mother, can you explain why you felt this closeness to her?

Garcia: To begin with, ever since I was big enough to go out and work in the field, my mother had me out there working in the field. Of course, my dad was working by himself. I'd see more of my mother than my father. I'd see my mother from the time I'd get up till I'd go to bed. Again, he was a man of more action than words. He was never any good at words, and my mother would sit down and talk with us and explain things that my dad wouldn't and I think that's why, being around my mother so much it did create this problem, which really wasn't a problem. There again, as I mentioned earlier, my father would be gone the best part of the day. When he'd come home in the evenings, he'd been doing hard manual labor and he'd naturally eat supper, relax for an hour or so and then go to bed. Whereas, my mother and I would start wrestling. Just sort of the stuff you would expect from a father. I know my kids expect that from me--to horse around with them and play with them and wrestle with them. My mother was always like this, playful with me, whereas my father wasn't. One thing I knew, If I did something wrong, my mother was the only one in the house, I sort of knew I would get by with a scolding but not a beating. If my father got wind of it, I knew I wouldn't get a scolding, I'd get a beating.

Adams: Did it seem like the time that he did take some sort of action was to punish you?

Garcia: This was going on when I was growing up. Later on we had a change. I'd go up in the mountains with my father which I enjoyed very much and I still have some memorable experiences. We'd go small-game hunting together and this sort of brought us together. Then we had three horses that we used to ride all the time and this was my chore that my father gave to me, and I took great pride in taking care of our horses. We'd leave at three four o'clock in the morning and go up for firewood in the horse and wagon and it would take us all day to get the wood down and loaded and come back. I did spend a lot of time after that with my father. This was right before school started or even after school started and we'd gather up all our firewood for the winter. We'd spend about seven days together then and after that we'd go rabbit hunting. My father never liked fishing and I don't either, but that's beside the point. Later on, too, I noticed this about him that as I grew older, I noticed he wasn't as quick to discipline my younger brothers and sisters. I think my mom broke him of the habit. He wouldn't talk to us at first about anything. He was a man of action. He'd strike us and beat us, not to a point of death or anything, but he would teach us a lesson, and I know that if maybe he hadn't done this, things would have been worse than they are.

Adams: You think they might have been worse?

Garcia: I think so. Because I see some of the kids now that are growing up and their parents just try to talk to them and it's not helping at all, just the talking. So I've been trying a combination of discipline. I talk to the boys and the next time it's a beating. Then before I do hit them I explain to them that it's been explained to them before, that they had a chance and that I'm not punishing them because I'm bigger but because of the fact that they are in the wrong.

Adams: What kind of work did your father do?

Garcia: He was a common laborer. He worked out in the fields during the summer, irrigating, or about doing anything, and in the winter he'd work in the potato work.

Adams: Did this go on all the time, or was there a period when he didn't work?

Garcia: Very rarely. He was always on the ball. That's one thing I can say about him. He always provided for us. It didn't matter what time of the year it was. Generally he'd come out of the potato cellars around the 15th or 20th of May and he'd start looking for a job in April. By that time he'd always have a job for the whole summer.

Adams: So he was always looking for work?

Garcia: He'd go from the warehouse and go right to the farm and work until about a week before potato harvest. Then he would get a potato crew together, the family included, and we'd all work together. After that he'd have two or three weeks off to get our firewood in and he had a big engine that would run this rotary blade and saw the wood up. They would saw it up and mom would help and he'd have somebody else helping and they'd stack it all up in the shed.

Adams: What about the other men in Lariat? Do you feel there's this much of a drive in them to work as you saw in your own father?

Garcia: Well, I think that the majority of them do due to the fact that they have a large family. Anybody knows that if you have a large family, any little slack that you have, you're just thrown off completely. It's very hard to get back on your feet again. I think the majority of people there did work as much as they could. They wouldn't want to be without work. But here again you have the oddballs, and I guess the majority of people always judge by a few. Here again, like any other section of town, we have the man that has a large family and can't hold on to a job. He'll go and work a week and get paid and go back home and maybe won't even give any to the family. He'll start drinking and once that's gone, he'll slack off two or three days and go look for another job, it might take another week. Then he works another week and he'll go through this routine year in and year out.

Adams: Do you think that's the kind of thing that gets the reputation?

Garcia: Yes, I think so, because the people here in town still have an outlook of Lariat as it was twenty or thirty years ago. Closer to thirty years ago. Some of them have never actually been in there till this summer. They actually did go in there and find out that because you were walking down the street you wouldn't get raped or beaten up or have your property messed up or any of this stuff that they had the impression of years and years ago. They had the impression that Lariat was a hole in the wall; that that's where all the bad people were.

Adams: What do you mean when you say this summer it changed. How do you mean?

Garcia: Well, here again I noticed this summer a lot. Maybe because I'm more involved in it than I've ever been, but I do notice even some out of town cars driving around in Lariat. Either, they are casing you or casing us, I don't know. But since we're there together, we're all involved. I have noticed even some of the local people. There's one gentleman I saw in there that I hadn't seen for at least ten years. He had a big sheep farm and he was always looking for help. I hadn't seen him in there since he retired and came to live in the city. He was driving a big old Oldsmobile. He's always been real nice to me and my father did work for him. As I said, it surprised me to see him there. People from Alamosa have come and there have been some people even from Pueblo and other places from around there, just taking it in whereas before the only ones that would go in there were the ones that had to pick up a hand or go take a hand to get some clothing or something like that. They'd 90 in and 100 out so they didn't get much of a look at anything.

Adams: You mean they just drove in and drove out fast? How did you feel about the isolation of Lariat from the rest of the community?

Garcia: Well, at first I had the impression that if you were from Lariat, you had to show everybody else that you were mean and tough. Later on I was called a dirty Mexican from Lariat. So what? I called them back, too. This went on for two or three years. Then I transferred from the public schools into a parocial school and had five years of that. I came out of there a real good boy but I have always been a Catholic and involved in the Church. This again I think has helped to a great extent to not have this ill feeling towards your neighbor as I probably would have had otherwise.

Adams: Do many of the boys or the girls in Lariat go to parochial schools?

Garcia: About twenty-five families.

Adams: You said this was a turning-point for you?

Garcia: Yes, I know that it used to be that all the Catholic kids had to attend the Catholic school prior to this, and this was okay. In order to pay your tuition and your books, like I mentioned before during potato harvest, all the family would get together. We'd work for three or four weeks and combined all our money together and from that my mom would buy all our clothing, pay all our books, pay all our tuition. Then she'd stock up on all kinds of groceries--flour, and they would go and buy two or three sheep and we'd butcher them and she would pack them in jars just like you do fruit and whatever dad brought in during the winter didn't go all to buying groceries.

Adams: In other words what you made in the fall in the harvest, you pooled it together within your family?

Garcia: Within our own family, yes.

Adams: Did many of the other families do this?

Garcia: This at that time went on with a lot of families. I have an uncle who has done it for many years. Last year was the first time he didn't, and he sure found out how fast fifty dollars can go in groceries. I think he has around eight or nine kids. He was used to doing this and whatever he worked during the winter would go for gas and heat and lights and this and that and maybe just odds and ends that you couldn't buy in quantities. He told me it was real hard because of the fifty dollars that he did make a week during the winter that thirty-five or forty dollars of it went for groceries and he didn't have much of it left. So it was convenient to have all this ready at hand and paid for and everything else so they could just go and get something when they needed it. I think this was brought in with the older people that they used to not go to town as often, once or twice a month. Therefore they would stock up and they knew they could get by 'til the next time they went to town. We did not have a car until I was seventeen. There was at least seventeen years that we didn't own an automobile. Sometimes I remember going to town in a horse and buggy with my dad to pick up the groceries. Here again there was always a friend that would offer a ride or we'd pay for a delivery.

Adams: When you said you would come to town, you meant to Monte Vista?

Garcia: Well, here again, I say come to town. Where I've been living in Lariat, and town we call the shopping aspect of it.

Adams: Downtown area? But there was nothing in Lariat. You couldn't go there to buy?

Garcia: Well, there once was the La Casita store, which has been there ever since I was a kid. But here again, my mother, saving a penny here and a penny there, would rather have us carry the groceries or have them delivered from one of the grocery stores in town than pay two or three pennies more an item.

Adams: When you look at the strong people in Lariat, not physically strong, but the ones who really have been able to endure and survive, who are the people

Garcia: Well, the women mostly. Here again it seems to me like the women have gone further than the men have. I don't know if it's because the men are busy about their jobs and they don't have much contact with anybody else outside their family--maybe for fifteen or twenty minutes in the morning and then an hour or so in the evening. They're gone the best part of the day and here again you have this from seven o'clock or six o'clock in the morning 'til seven or six o'clock in the afternoon. After you come out of there you just don't feel like you're the same person.

Adams: How do you mean, you don't feel like you're the same person?

Garcia: Well, you're tired and you're grouchy. You've probably noticed yourself after an exceptionally hard day that even your wife could do something that she does all the time as a friendly gesture and you could have a rebuttal, come back out fighting.

Adams: And these are the kind of thing, irritated, tired . . . . Do you feel that the men spend much time with their children?

Garcia: No, not hardly any time at all. Well, they didn't used to. I see more of the men now with their families than I used to when I was a kid. Of course, our family had always been real close, the kids with the parents and Saturday night was the kids' night that we'd get our heavy clothing out and all the kids would walk down to the theater and we'd stay there till we saw the movie, and if one of the kids or I or somebody else wanted to see it all over again we'd stay till it was all over and then we'd walk back in the snow. This was generally once a week, and it was very disappointing not to have it happen.

Adams: It was something you looked forward to?

Garcia: Yes, it was something to look forward to, and there were some incidents at that time that did occur. There was one movie, I can't remember what it was, "Spooky Movie" or something like that. There was a full moon and we were walking right next to a baseball field. I pushed my sister and my sister pushed my mother and we started pushing each other and I pushed my mother and she slid and she got her ankle caught and she had a sprained ankle for about three weeks. My sister and I asked my father to come back and help us and he said, "No, you're just playing around, you're just horsing around," and he was about a block ahead of us. Here we were running back and forth having a great time. We had to carry my mom home. She had a nasty ankle for about three weeks. But I think that people do, parents do, spend more time with their kids than they used to. Maybe because even if they don't have a good home or a good yard or something like this where they can play together, they usually have a car or a friend has a car to pick them up and drive them maybe down to the park.

Adams: Does this tradition of goint to the movie every Saturday night, does this still go on now?

Garcia: I think so, for the kids, I think it's changed now to maybe Sunday afternoon. But I don't see as many parents with their kids as I did then. They usually let them go with an older cousin or an older friend and they sit in the theater till, well, not till it's over--on Sunday it runs continually from one o'clock till midnight or something.

Adams: Fred, I'm going to ask you a real hard question, maybe really hard.

When you were growing up, when you were in school, did you feel you had much to look forward to in your life?

Garcia: Well, no, I actually thought I didn't. At first I was just being there, not actually participating in anything and not getting anything out of it, just being there. I had a real good talk with the principal and that sort of put me on the ball again. Then I talked to the priest and some of the nuns that had taught me in grade school and I got myself straightened out this way.

Adams: You went to people whom you could talk with?

Garcia: Yes, I had a talk with the chief of police just for a half hour or so. I was running around with a pretty wicked bunch. They weren't really wicked but they just wanted to do something to bring attention, to get people to take notice of them. They had quit school in the ninth or tenth grade and they were working and earning forty or fifty dollars a week, which was very impressive while I was still going to school, and some of them tried to get me to quit. I had a real good talk with my mom and talked with all these people and with my mother. She would say, "You don't want to be like your father, having to work sun up to sun down." This way you would have more time with your family if you ever get married," and she started explaining some of the things that they had to go through. Maybe if I had a better education I wouldn't have to go through them, and this got me to realizing and I actually did come out of it.

Adams: But you felt there were people you could go to?

Garcia: Yes, this made a difference.

Adams: What was it in the people you went to that made you feel better or different?

Garcia: Well, the priest, I could talk to him and I knew that he would have only my best interest in it. I could talk to him and I knew that he wouldn't side with me. If I was wrong he would tell me. He wouldn't let me find this out for myself. He would crack down and tell me, "You're doing this and this wrong." I could listen to him because I thought of him as a buddy. As a priest I knew that some Sundays, some Saturdays in the afternoon, I'd go and mow the lawn for him and he'd go out in the lawn and we'd get the boxing gloves on and have a little match between us, with the other boys there. But I thought of him as a priest and then as a friend, as a buddy I could talk to and that I knew could understand.

Adams: Did other boys feel this way toward him?

Garcia: We had a club where all the altar boys participated. This had quite an impression on the younger boys because any time that they would be caught, maybe down at the store taking a candy bar or something like this, that wasn't worth calling the police, they would just call up the priest and have him talk with us.

Adams: Do you have this kind of priest here now?

Garcia: We did. We have a new priest now. He just left the other day. I haven't had much contact with him, so I don't know. But I think that generally any priest will be very happy to talk to any of the boys. The chief of police, I went to him because I knew that he'd give me sort of a run-down of what would happen if I continued doing this, and continued the way that I was going, that I would end up in trouble.

Adams: Do other boys do this, do any of them ever come to you and ask you?

Garcia: Yes, I've had several kids, now that I've started with the force, come up to me and talk to me in this manner. They've never been in jail before. They've never been in trouble but they're undecided yet. They're on top of the teeter totter, they're in the middle of it and they could slide any way. So I put them in the car and we go down to the police station and I let them see all the cells in there.

Adams: Do you think this helps?

Garcia: I think so, to a great extent, because if more people knew what lay behind those bars, I don't think they would go. It comes to the point of realizing--some of the kids think this jail business is nothing but nice--anything to get away, maybe from their families or something like this. They think it's like having a picnic and they think that four hamburgers a day is very good. After they're in there a day or two and they realize all they can look at is four walls surrounding them and through those bars. Once their magazines run out they don't feel so hot. Up to this point, well, it's just like this kid that comes from Golden, or Buena Vista; he thinks that it's nice. Well maybe it is, to a point that they have their clothing and their meals and a place to stay and sort of belong to the gang. Yet when I take them in there and they start realizing how much trouble they could get into and the way they would be treated, this they don't like. So I go in and I show them some of the mug books and usually they have a friend or two that have been mugged or an uncle or some relative that they do know, and then they start thinking again.

Adams: When you said you had the feeling that some of them did this because they wanted to get away from their families, could you talk a little more about that?

Garcia: I can't even remember who it was, but this was said during a conversation. I even believe it was down at Taylor's Tavern. This kid, the only reason he had got into trouble was because he wanted to get away from his family. His parents were at each other's throats and when they couldn't get there they picked on the kids. This, I too think, would have made me leave, but he said that he got into some trouble so he could be sent somewhere he could go and more or less think this out and try to see what his folks were doing.

Adams: He talked with you about this, in this way?

Garcia: Yes. Well, I noticed he was always out in the streets until twelve or twelve-thirty. Everything was all shut down. And this was evening after evening. I was a bartender down at the tavern and I noticed him coming in all the time. Once in a while he wouldn't even have any money or anything, so I'd open up a pop for him and set it there and we'd start talking. In the wintertime there wasn't hardly any customers so I had plenty of time to talk to him. Then I started teaching him to play checkers and some of this stuff. Then I'd try to get a pencil and paper and just do stuff that would require him to do a little thinking, and he started shaping up a little bit and he's doing okay now.

Oh, his manner of speaking and acting is still the same, but I think he has a different outlook.

Adams: You mean a different feeling inside about himself, maybe? When you were talking with him, could you feel with him the kind of things he was talking about?

Garcia: Yes, because I have seen them, I know what they're like. If a father comes home drunk in the middle of the night and scatters the family all over town, well that doesn't stand too good in anybody's book. And this is continued time after time, not only getting kicked out but actually getting beaten. You're going to stay out of the home as long as possible, till you could go and come to sleep without any trouble.

Adams: What do the women do in this?

Garcia: Well, the way I think about it is some of the women contribute to some of this. I don't say all of them do, but knowing women, they're right in the midst of it anyway. They contribute to this to an extent when they don't try to straighten out their house and they don't prepare a meal or have a kid washed up, where an argument could start and have him go out and get a bottle and come back and do what they do to their family.

Adams: Do you think some of them have just given up?

Garcia: Some of them have to an extent. Well, they do hold their heads up, but there's something you notice that is lacking, that isn't there.

Adams: Do you think they don't feel good about themselves?

Garcia: Yes, I do think so, because working there at the bar, they come in and cry on my shoulder once in a while, and living there in Lariat, and knowing the conditions that do exist there, I could feel and I did feel what they were up against.

Adams: When you were still working in the bar and they came there, what did they talk about?

Garcia: Oh, they'd start out real mad and they'd start tearing their wives down and I'd move out of the way and let them chat for a while with themselves. Then I'd come back and change the subject. I'd say, "Where are you working now?" or "Work hard today?" and pretty soon I'd get them relaxed where they could talk freely and not use all the language they were before.

Adams: When they came in they were pretty mad. And what about the women? What did they talk about?

Garcia: Oh, the women, they'd think their husband was no good, always drunk, and that he mistreats them and beats them up and beats up the kids, and I'd turn around and ask if they have done anything to encourage this and they say, "No, no." "What are you doing right now?" "Trying to forget everything." That's just going to create more problems, the way I look at it." Oh, I talk to some of them like that, but especially when they're drinking you can't talk to them very freely like you can a man, because even if a woman is drunk, you know, and Pow! I can't get through to the women like I do the men.

Adams: Did it bother you to see the women come in like that?

Garcia: At first, yes, it did. Because in our families the women never drank. Of course now everything's changed. My mother never drank, oh, she had a beer or two, not a whole lot, once in a while for a special occasion, christening or something like this, she would have one. My father, as far as I can remember--I've only seen him drunk once, and that was when I was eight years old. That has a very good impression on me, because even up to now all the other kids fight with their fathers, they get drunk together and they fight, which I can't see. But getting back to the point that women do contribute some to this that goes on, yet again, you can't be the judge, because actually if you don't see the whole thing I don't think a person can judge by just pieces here and there. I think a person has to be present since it began to really evaluate the thing and get down to actually what really is happening.

Adams: You said something that struck me; you said it's all changed now. What did you mean?

Garcia: Well, what I mean is that women are drinking more now than they used to. Women are working more now and they're driving automobiles and this and that, which was primarily the role of the male. Now women are practically holding down any job and they drive a car just as good as a man does and therefore they're taking up drinking just as men do.

Adams: Do you think they are assuming more responsibility in the family?

Garcia: Well, maybe not in the family, but in the outside world they are. I know several families that both men and women work and they seem to get along pretty good. Of course, whenever there's a hassle there's a big one. It's nothing small like it would be otherwise. He comes out with, "Why aren't the kids clean?" or something and she says, "Well, I've been working," and you have this friction because of the work involved, because she is working and neglecting her responsibilities in the home and she would answer, "Why don't you help once in a while, I'm helping you." This I find has worked out where the husband and wife come home from work and share equally the routine work of the house where maybe he could do the dishes or put up a bed or stuff like this in the home that he generally wouldn't do.

Adams: Does your wife work?

Garcia: No.

Adams: Would you want her to?

Garcia: No.

Adams: When you know that the change, the fact that the women are taking this new step upward, and you said that it had to come because of Lariat, because of the fact that the people had nothing coming into the community, what does it do about the relationship between parents and their children?

Garcia: Well, I think this won't change very much. Maybe it will change for the better because even the husband will realize to a great extent that they're going to work and they're gone all day and they do want to spend some time with the children, any chance they get. I know that I myself for one haven't spent much time with my family lately. But any chance I do get, even on my night off I spend and try to go to the drive-in or just stay home with the whole family.

Adams: It bothers you, doesn't it being away so much?

Garcia: It does, and I think that the wife too will come home and she'll do more, and she'll do it in a way that's different. To some women, I think their housework is a drag, that they go through it but it's the same old thing, But if they come home from work and they start getting supper ready and their husband will go out and start doing something else to help. Maybe he'll go and visit with the kids while mom's getting supper ready and she'll go and visit with the kids and maybe he'll do the dishes, it gets to be more and more a share and share alike deal than maybe the husband's responsibility to bring home the pay and the woman's responsibility is taking care of the kids and family, now it's being more joined by both.

Adams: Do you know places where this hasn't happened yet? Are there other plances in which Spanish-American families live where this is not the case?

Garcia: Yes, but here again we don't even have enough employment for the male population, much less the female.

Adams: What about the young girls who grow up in the family, are things changing for them?

Garcia: Yes, I think so. I think that when they get married they will expect to work.

Adams: What about before they get married, do the fathers treat them differently now than they used to?

Garcia: Yes, I think they've got a more loose rein than they did years ago. Years ago I know that the males could be more on their own than the females could. I know that if one of my sisters came home later than ten o'clock she wouldn't go out for several weeks, and get a beating to boot. And I know if I stayed over ten-thirty or tweleve or whatever it was I'd get a scolding but my privileges wouldn't be taken away.

Adams: It was expected you might do this? How else is it changing with the girls?

Garcia: Well, the girls go out on dates and generally the time they're expected to be back home is twelve o'clock or maybe the time the drive-in or something will be over. But it is changing to an extent where the parent has slacked quite a bit in bringing up the children.

Adams: Do you think you will be this way as a father?

Garcia: I hope not. I feel that I was always controlled to an extent. Of course they didn't know what was going on behind their backs, and I won't either. I think that if I bring up my kids the way I was brought up that I won't have anything to worry about.

Adams: So you want to continue. But what kind of conflict does this throw you in? You see the world around changing, and you want to continue.

How do you deal with this?

Garcia: Well, I say to myself: "I've only got one family to take care of. I'll take care of it in the way I feel is/to the best interest of all of us and whatever anybody else wants to do with their family is one of their privileges." I have this feeling, but here again I don't think I object to the way that--I understand it--I object, but I know it's there.

Adams: Let's talk a little bit about the VISTA volunteers. Could you tell me a little bit about how you felt when they first came to Lariat?

Garcia: Well, I know long before they came that they were coming, and I was looking forward to it. They were different than anyone in town. They were out in Lariat as a group, and individually they'd go out and start getting to know the people. Here I found that they were interested. You don't just go into a strange town and start making friends. It's not easy. Some of them did go and talk to me or ask me for a name or something like this or they would start talking to a person and they would mention my name and that would get them to sort of relax. They would have something in common and they could strike up a conversation and start going. I really enjoyed the time that I did spend with them. I know that I got a lot of good out of it and I sure hope that they did too. I was real glad when I heard they were coming and I even felt better when they did finally get here. It was an experience to have seen and been part of this change. I felt kind of sad when they left knowing that God knows when we'd meet again and if we did meet again that we'd probably know each other.

Adams: That was the first group?

Garcia: That was the first group. I know I haven't got to know as many in this group in the short time that I did by then but of course I had more free time and was more involved in it than I am now. I also think that the group here will probably get as involved as the other group was and be out there meeting people and making friends.

Adams: What are the kinds of things they can do to be accepted in a community similar to Lariat?

Garcia: First of all, I think they should have someone that is more or less known to the community. If there's anybody that they can talk to that they can first approach and that the majority of the people do know. Therefore you have something in common. Take me for instance, I'm related to practically everybody there. Everytime that my name is mentioned somebody knows me or is related to me. Therefore they feel more like talking to you than otherwise. But of course, you guys have it easy now. This friction has already been broken. You can go just about any place and start a conversation. They know you're from the VISTA group. But maybe next time when you are placed, it won't be so easy. You may have to get your own contacts while here you came and everything was sort of started and organized already. You didn't have to go in and start from scratch like the other group did. But I think if you find somebody that you can talk to and will know some of the better people there that you will have a better chance than if you try to talk to everybody individually. By this I mean if you talk to somebody you should maybe start with their own families. For instance if you talked to a younger couple that you could probably get them to introduce you to their folks and to their other brothers and sisters. From there you could branch out. You could start from there and work through the whole section of the community.

Adams: What you're saying then is that one way to establish contact is to get going with someone and then move through the family, through the relationship pattern, this is one way.

Garcia: Yes, because I think that the poverty people, if you know one of their relations, you'll have a chance at least to start talking to them. Whereas I know that if you go up and say "I know this and this person." -- "That's my cousin" and you have something in common therefore you've already started to get in. Otherwise, probably the first group did notice that some people you start talking to and you can talk your head off and all you get is a nod or a "No"--not very much conversation. If this doesn't work or you want to try a different approach, the kids are always real good. If you know little Johnny and kids have a tendency, anybody that they're impressed with right, they want to introduce them to their folks. If you're in with Johnny you can just about be assured that you're in with the family.

Adams: You're saying that when the VISTA's go to some of the other communities that it might be very wise to work with the younger kids in the beginning, and that way you may be able to reach the parents.

Garcia: Right. Find yourself a central location say for instance like Jake's store down there in Lariat where some of the kids hang around--where there are always kids around. Go in there and act yourself and offer a pop or a candy bar or something like this, especially to kids. Take, for instance, you went into your new location and you met this boy Johnny and offered him a pop and started getting interested in him and asked him about his favorite sport or his favorite hobby and this and that and you strike it good with Johnny and you say, "Johnny what are you doing tonight?" or "Where do you live with your folks?" You may wish to chang the subject little by little and therefore you have a location you can come back to and if you think he's losing interest and you won't get to meet his folks you can start back and work it up again. It might mean two or three Pepsi's, but here again, you get going this way and if you're introduced to the parents by their kid -- if MY kid thinks he's great he must be, because there's no kid better then MY kid. People do have this feeling and this attitude that if they're introduced by one of their relations you have a better chance of being heard than otherwise, than just being a total stranger, and walking in.

Adams: You think this business of, like you described so well, of hanging around, finding out where the kids go and just hanging around. You don't have to come in and say "I'm offering Pepsi's to everybody who will listen to me" but you hang around for a while, that's sort of what you're saying.

Garcia: Sure, you hang around and you sort of pick out the one that you think will pan out, or the one that you think is maybe a leader, or maybe a bully. You know, everybody knows a bully and he's recognized as one of the leaders, and if you can get to this person you just about have it made. If you can break the ice with one of these bullies who's well known, you've got all kinds of things working for you. "If I don't cooperate with this guy, this bully will get back at me." It more or less works this way, but here again if it does pan out and you've got to the toughest one, the rest will be that much easier.

Adams: I want to ask you another hard question. You really tell us straight about things. Have you heard anything bad about the VISTA's?

Garcia: Oh, nothing bad, just little things, like, the first group we had was a big group, like noisiness in the hotel, but you get any bunch , not just the VISTA group, kids, by kids I mean the younger generation. You get any group together and there's always a bunch of squawking and stuff. They usually break off into small groups. We had one incident where Alice was sitting in the park and I was patrolling and I stopped and she asked if it was OK for her and some friends to ride with us and I said I thought it was and I felt reluctant to have all four in the car in case maybe I had to pick somebody up or something so I called in the other officer and said I needed some help down at the park. So he comes in like sixty and he says "What's the trouble, Fred?" and as soon as I saw him coming fast I realized what I had done, so he came and after I told him what a fool I'd been he said, "It's OK and so he took two and I took two and the next day Alice told me she had heard they'd jailed four of the VISTA volunteers for fighting in the park.

Adams: Have they done anything in Lariat that has upset or bothered people? This is the kind of thing we need to know.

Garcia: The only bad thing I've heard about them is that they're real eager to work and real hard-working. This is the worst part that I've heard. That they get in there and they're not like the local people. Local people won't get involved. They haven't cared. As long as I've lived here I haven't seen another Anglo from uptown walk hand in hand with a three or four year old Spanish boy. This sure hit me real good when I saw this going on and Alice walking around with six or seven little kids dangling from her. This is real good. I know she's real good with kids and she's always involved. The kids really like them all and I haven't heard anything.

Adams: What could they do that could upset people? What are the kinds of things they might do? Not these people, but anyone of the VISTA's?

Garcia: Oh, I don't know maybe a boy or girl dating one of the locals, this could create a problem. I don't know if any of them have done this, but here again different people have different attitudes. There's nothing wrong with dating any of the locals as far as that goes, but the talk is what kills it, it could get real bad.

Adams: How do you mean?

Garcia: Well, to begin with if a local boy went out with a VISTA girl and he didn't get anything done, I mean she thought she had a good time and he thought he got a rotten deal, and therefore it might hit the male ego and since they didn't get anything done they're going to say they did and "Well, he got away with it" and somebody else will try it and this will just keep going and create a mess.

Adams: It's better not to get on that intimate a relationship; is this what you're saying?

Garcia: I think so.

Adams: If they do...

Garcia: Correct. From a little or nothing, they like to make a big thing out of it and it is not the volunteer that is criticized but the entire group.

Adams: I wonder if we could shift from the VISTA's for a few minutes, and then we'll come back. I'm sure that the VISTA's are going to have things they'd like to ask about too. But I'd like to talk again about you for a minute, because I think... How do you feel about yourself Fred, what kind of person do you see yourself as being?

Garcia: Well, I don't know, I feel that I'm the kind of person that anything I get involved with I have to see it all the way through, not VISTA or anything, just a feeling that I have toward myself that if I get involved in anything I try my darndest to make it come out the best. It doesn't always happen but I don't give up, I keep hacking at it.

Adams: Why do you think you have this feeling?

Garcia: I don't know. Like I mentioned earlier, I was from Lariat, and going into high school the impression they had about me was real bad and I just had to show everybody that I wasn't and that I was equal, maybe even better than they were. I drove myself to a great physical point, as I mentioned I was small for my age and 30 pounds underweight but at 108 pounds I think I could tackle anybody in school including the principal and he was a big man. But this I had to prove to myself; that just because I was small everybody couldn't run over me. This was a feeling that I had to work out myself.

Adams: Was this part of what we hear so often about pride?

Garcia: Yes, there is a lot of pride in the people of Lariat. They're proud people, poor but proud. You can't have everything that you desire, but pride is something that nobody can take away from you, something that you have to achieve for yourself.

Adams: Don't you think that some of them have this taken away?

Garcia: Yes, to a great extent some of them have. Because several people have tried their darndest and everything they get is criticism.

Adams: They get hurt?

Garcia: I know for myself anybody could come up and punch me in the nose and I could take it better than a sassy look or a smart remark or or something like that.

Adams: And this is the kind of thing that hurts most?

Garcia: I think so. This is one reason I changed from the way that my father used to talk to us and discipline us. My oldest boy is sensitive and I can dare him down with one look rather than with a beating, which I think does more good than a beating actually would.

Adams: This snesitivity he has seems to be very much like you.

Garcia: Real timid, like me. Kids, even two or three years younger than he is have beat the heck out of him and I still can't get him to defend himself. Of course I never was a fighter but later on in years I found that you had to fight. There was no way out of it. You actually had to get physically involved. You can't just get out of it by talking. You just get tired of getting whipped, or you just fight back, one of the two.

Adams: What is the pride that you mention of the people in Lariat? How did this come about? How did they get this pride?

Garcia: I don't know. I think that some of this is probably picked up when they're kids. They're either proud of their achievements, or even as poor as they are, there's a pride that even poverty can't take away.

Adams: You can't explain it. It's the way they're brought up by the parents, the way that you're teaching your boy. And yet it puts you in a position to be hurt so much, doesn't it?

Garcia: Very much. Even downtown. It's difficult especially downtown. Once you're across the Lariat ditch you can relax.

Adams: You mean you can relax when you cross the Lariat ditch, you can't when you're downtown?

Garcia: You've always got your guard up, and be just prepared for anything. It might not be local people, but somebody's always trying to tear you down.

Adams: When is the first time young kids get hurt?

Garcia: Well, probably the first time when they go in to school. They don't have as good clothing as the student next to them. Their shoes aren't as good and their hair is way too long, and stuff like this. I mean they're clean in body and soul but people look down on you as something different, something from Lariat.

Adams: Is this when you start learning how to deal with this?

Garcia: First you try to beat everybody that just looks at you. Later on you get to a point where anybody that looks at you or tries to give you advice you don't trust them, you fight them, not even your teacher. Your teachers could stop most of this, but they probably feel the same way. They just don't show it, not in their words and actions towards the little kids, but after class between themselves they'll say "I've got this kid from Lariat and you should have seen the way he was dressed." I've heard this in our school system there. I heard two female teachers talking in the central school. I went up there for something and they were talking about this young kid that had just gone in and "Evidently he's from Lariat, he's from Lariat." Later on I found that his family had moved there from New Mexico and they were poor, and naturally he just fitted into the Lariat group. They already had him pegged. I asked the teacher what she thought of him, as a teacher, and she said that he just ruined the whole class. The whole class was ruined because he was there. He was different than they were, his English was borken and he couldn't communicate with her and with the other kids as good as an Anglo boy or girl could.

Adams: Do you think they could have learned something from this young boy if they had cared?

Garcia: Yes, to begin with I think it's essential if you're going to be situated in a community like this that you should pick up all the Spanish or the language that the poverty people talk. You yourself know that even if you've taken French or some other language in school, true, you can communicate with people, but then if they know English like you do, then you just naturally turn back to English instead of your French or other language. I know that some of the kids I talk to they talk a little bit in English and get along good in English but here again you can't express yourself and say the things you want to say because some words have two different meanings and some Spanish words mean entirely different in English and still could be the same word.

Adams: Rather than learning from this young boy --

Garcia: They were so set on him being an outcast they didn't take the time to make him feel that he was part of the group. In fact she said that she had him to the side of the classroom.

Adams: She actually put him to the side of the classroom?

Garcia: I talked to the Central School principal and they later fixed the boy up with some decent clothing and he was brought back and they had a real good talk with her and I guess she sort of straightened out but then again since she had to do it to please somebody else she wasn't quite capable of anything else.

Adams: I'll [illegible] we're going [illegible]. Then I'll introduce the people who [illegible] really teach today. We feel that -- this kind of training program -- is very helpful for you to get to hear, [illegible] only the professors [illegible] the universities, but the kind of thing people face in their lives, and particularly in areas like Monte Vista. We thought of the idea of having people from the neighborhood themselves each with us. So that's what we are going to do today. We'll start off -- this is Mrs. Chavez, and Mrs. Martinez, and I understand that some of you already know Mrs. Martinez. I doubt if you know Mrs. Chavez, because she has just gotten out of the hospital this morning. She's been in for two weeks, so you probably haven't met her. Mrs. Chavez is the mother of Mrs. Martinez. The three of us are going to teach today. We have known each other before. You'll probably say "How did they get to know each other so well?". Partly, it's because we taught together for the last group of VISTAS. We're going to teach again today. After we go for about forty-five minutes, then you get to come into it too. So you listen very carefully, and if you have any questions on anything that comes up, if you want us to talk more about them, then we'll all get involved. I wonder if we could start today by having you tell a little bit about the difference between being here today and the first time you came.

Mrs. Chavez: They've done a lot of things. They've took out the weeds, and rocks and glass, and cleaned them out real good. And they've been coming to the homes and helping the people. We learn from them and they learn from us.

Adams: What kinds of things do you learn from them?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, they tell us things about where they come from, the climate there, and where they're going from here, and we try to let them see the way we live: the kinds of things we have to do.

Adams: Yes, the kinds of things you do every day in your homes? And Mrs. Martinez, how does it seem different to you?

Mrs. Martinez: And then the kids, they have a teacher in the afternoon, and they have crafts and they teach them how to color, and things like that. They make bracelets and necklaces and things like that in the afternoons. The kids are real anxious in the afternoons to get ready and go to class. And then when they go to the playground we know that there's somebody there to take care of them.

Adams: Were there playgrounds before?

Mrs. Martinez: No, they didn't have any place to play like that.

Adams: How many children do you have?

Mrs. Martinez: I have six.

Adams: And their ages?

Mrs. Martinez: My oldest is thirteen, and my youngest is three.

Adams: Before during the summer, what would they do?

Mrs. Martinez: Oh, just play and fight. They haven't been getting into so many fights this summer because they stay over there.

Adams: You think it's because they have something to do that might have something to do with it?

Mrs. Martinez: I think that's the reason.

Adams: Let's talk a little bit about yourselves now. When did you first come to Monte Vista, Mrs. Chavez?

Mrs. Chavez: I came to Monte Vista in May, 1932.

Adams: What had you been doing before then?

Mrs. Chavez: I had been mostly on ranches with my dad and my folks, and I used to go to school, you know, community school.

Adams: Have you always lived around here in the valley?

Mrs. Chavez : I have always lived around here. I was born in Antonito, Colorado.

Adams: How old were you when you got married?

Mrs. Chavez: I was twenty.

Adams: You were twenty? When you moved here to Monta Vista were you married?

Mrs. Chavez: No.

Adams: You got married afterwards? And then how many children did you have?

Mrs. Chavez: I had ten.

Adams: And Gloria, what was she in number?

Mrs. Chavez: Number one. I had twin girls. Then I had a boy that died. Then afterwards, eleven years afterwards I had my other one, my other girl. And then from then on I had one, two, three.

Adams: Why was there such a long space between Gloria and her sister, the one eleven years later?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, I don't know. I guess there was something wrong with me. I didn't have any children or anything. But I had a midwife, because there was a midwife here in the area that used to take care of all the women so I've only had three with a doctor.

Adams: Did you ever have any complications with any of these births, were they sometimes difficult?

Mrs. Chavez: No.

Adams: What about health? You said one died, was this early in his life?

Mrs. Chavez: It was early in his life. Well, they didn't have medicine like they do now. They've done a lot of advance in medicine now to what they had then. Then our little girl, she was three when she had meningitis and I took her to the doctor and the doctor I took her to, he didn't know how to recommend. He told me it was flu, so I quit taking her to him, and her legs began to get stiff and I took her to a hospital and so I called in another doctor and he told me that apparently this other doctor didn't know about meningitis. He told me she was real sick.

Adams: Do you think that the health care, the care that you get from the doctors, is better than it was then?

Mrs. Chavez: Oh yes.

Adams: What about with your children? Have you had any health problems?

Mrs. Martinez: Not too much, but I had a boy that was born with a club foot and we have to take him to Denver for treatments because we can't get that here and I was trying to take him and to do what the doctors told me. Sometimes we had to borrow money to go or to hock something good that we had so that we could make enough money to take him for the treatments. Now you couldn't tell he was like that. He walks and he runs and he plays you know, just the same as anybody else. He's not sick any more; not that bad. But this doctor, I don 't know what happened, the last time I took him to the clinic the doctor told me that I was neglecting him, that I wasn't doing what I was supposed to do, you know, taking him to the clinic and they wrote a letter to the welfare official telling him something about neglect or something.

Adams: Neglect: How did they mean that?

Mrs. Martinez: They said that we didn't want to find so that he could have another operation that he needed. I had gone and talked this winter to the lady from the welfare and explained that my boy needed an operation and I wanted to take him to Denver before he started school because he starts kindergarten this year. I said I thought it would be better and this way he would be over it by the time school started. This lady came and talked to me and she told me that she was going to write and tell them that they didn't have any right to say those things.

Adams: Which lady, now, was this?

Mrs. Martinez: The social worker from Del Norte. She helps the ones here around Lariat.

Adams: She serves Lariat too? Have you had much contact with the Welfare Department?

Mrs. Martinez: Since my husband works just part time, when I used to be having babies every year too, I had ten myself, but four died and six are living. When I had my last one we just couldn't afford to pay the doctor because once I had tried to have one at home alone like my mom because we didn't have any money at all and when they took me to the hospital the doctor didn't have any hopes for me. He said I was already too sick, so that baby died. She had been dead about three days before she was born. So he got mad and told me why hadn't I gone sooner, and I told him because I didn't have any money. But he said that money wasn't that important to them, that I should have gone but I felt kind of ashamed because we already owed for the one before that. The next year when I was going to have another one I went and talked to the welfare and told them that the doctor had told me not to have any more at home so they paid for me when I had my last two and then when I had my last one they sent me to Denver, and told me that I wouldn"t have any more.

Adams: What do you do, when you plan to have a baby at home, Mrs. Chavez? How do you go about this? Do you seem to make it work all right for you sometimes?

Mrs. Chavez: Well the only thing I can say is that it's real hard because you worry so much if it's going to be all right or not and my mother was a midwife but I didn't like to worry her when she was already worried about me I just used to request prayer and asking God.

Adams: When you say that your mother was a midwife, how does a woman become a midwife?

Mrs. Chavez: Well I think that because the doctors had never went to Lariat....

It was mostly emergencies that they had to cope with. There were none trained. They just had to go ahead and deliver babies because that way they would save the baby and the mother so they had to learn themselves.

Adams: So that when they learned they would help other people, was this the way? Was there anyone there to help you?

Mrs. Martinez: My grandma, her mother was at that time, but she told me that something was wrong, that's why I couldn't have it. The doctor told me that it was supposed to have been a Caesarian section baby. Since I stayed home so long he said I just wouldn't make it if he did so they just had to take the baby out with instruments. He said "If the baby had not been dead by the time it came it would have had to be her or you," Then after that I didn't stay home, I just went to the hospital.

Adams: So from then on you tried to see the doctor when you could. What about your children, are they able to get medical care?

Mrs. Martinez: If we have the money to take them, but otherwise.....

Adams: If you have the money?

Mrs. Martinez: We take them to the doctor when we have the money, but sometimes if they're sick we just cure them at home and hope that they get well, but they seem to be healthy, almost all of them.

Adams: All of them are getting along pretty well now? What does your husband do,Mrs. Martinez?

Mrs. Martinez: He works helping bale hay in the summer time, and in the winter he works in the cellars, the potato cellars. They're not too steady jobs because in the winter it's more steady than in the summer, because in the summer when the hay's growing he doesn't have a job at all.

Adams: What does he do in the times that he doesn't work, what does he do then?

Mrs. Martinez: He goes fishing and drinks a lot.

Adams: Does he drink around the house?

Mrs. Martinez: Yes.

Adams: What happens then?

Mrs. Martinez: Oh, I don't know. The kids, like my oldest girl, she gets embarrassed and everything, and she tells me why don't I leave him, but I'm tied, I used to go live with my mom but it isn't enough because I live about two houses from her now.

Adams: Are you living close together now?

Mrs. Martinez: Yes, we live on the same block, we are close.

Adams: Does your husband still live with you? (To Mrs. Chavez)

Mrs. Martinez: He's still staying with us.

Adams: How is that working out?

Mrs. Martinez: It was O.K. because when he got sick, he was sick a while, and he had quit drinking, but now he drinks so both of them stay home drinking and me and the kids go down to my mom's and stay over there that day that they're both drinking.

Adams: Do you ever see him very much?

Mrs. Martinez: She was in the hospital and he didn't even go to see her, he was drunk all the time.

Adams: Was he drunk all the time you were in the hospital?

Mrs. Chavez: He was in jail and they told me that he told the sheriff to let him out because I was in the hospital, and they let him out and he took that time to drink.

Adams: He got drunk again? Was that mainly why you left him at first?

Mrs. Chavez: That's why I left him. He used to drink almost every day. There's a lot of men that drink and bring their money to their wives but he didn't used to do that. If they paid in town I had to go ask him if he'd give me money. If he'd already spent it all, I don't know what he did with it, but the only way I could get money was to look for him in town before he spent it all.

Adams: How did you take care of things when, say, he would spend all the money? What would you do then for groceries?

Mrs. Chavez: My mother was alive then and my dad, so they used to help me out. I have a real good brother in California, he used to help me out too. He'd send me money.

Adams: Were there times that you could feel it was pretty desperate?

Mrs. Chavez: It was real hard for us because I had to borrow either from my folks. My mother and father used to get me things at the store on their bills, but sometimes I borrowed from my sister. She lived close by me.

Adams: Is this sort of what you were talking about last time when you said that when someone has something then he shares with the others; like when you got the money for the general assistance that time, when you bought the groceries, that we talked about last time. I wondered later, did you help other people then?

Mrs. Chavez: Yes, some women have a hard time too when their husbands aren't working or things like that so we all share what we have with the others.

Adams: It's more than just with your own family, you share with neighbors too?

Mrs. Chavez: I have a neighbor who has a lot of children. Her husband's a little like mine, I used to go through that and I know what it's like, and sometimes you do it because you know what the kids are going through.

Adams: You do it because you know what the children are having to face?

Mrs. Chavez: You know my daughter, when she had her babies she'd feed them baby food and good things like that, vitamins, and everything. I never could give my children that. I never could afford it. So after a while my husband and I separated. I had left him in July and went in with my mother. And then she had a stroke and passed away, that was on August 20th. The house I lived in belonged to my brother in California. He had built it for my mother and my dad. So when my mother passed away my brother came and said "Haven't you had enough?" because whenever he'd get drunk he'd go crazy and he'd threaten so I'd have to find a place to sleep so I'd go down to my mother's. My brother said "You're always looking for a place to stay. I think you'd better stay here at my mother's house and you live here with the children." I didn't want to go to the welfare because I had gone before and it was real hard on me. I don't know why, but they didn't seem to want to help me at all. So I didn't go to the welfare. When my mother died, my brother-in-law, my husband's brother, he's the one that went to the welfare and told them about my husband. He told them what I was going through with him and how he was, so he was the one that talked to the welfare and then they called me. See, first, after my mother died my dad went to Pueblo. We had to move out of the house and my brother-in-law loaned me a little house that he had. It was only one room. The kids were still in school. We didn't even have a stove, we had to wait until about eight o'clock for her husband to go to work so that my kids could go down there and wash and get ready for school. It was real hard for us. And my husband used to get drunk and go down and break the door. It was the same old thing, we were always running from him.

Adams: Is he still like this?

Mrs. Chavez: Sometimes, sometimes he drinks and just goes to sleep, and sometimes he drinks and talks.

Adams: Are there times when he's not drinking at all? What's he like then?

Mrs. Chavez: You hardly ever see him when he's not drinking.

Adams: When you said a little while ago that it was hard going to the welfare. It was hard. You couldn't talk to them. What did you mean?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, you see, my husband once took a truck. He was real drunk and he drove to Alamosa, and I guess he went to sleep driving. I don't know what happened, but they caught him and gave him six months in jail. In Alamosa they took me into the courtroom and told me right away to go to the welfare. They were going to help me right away because I had so many children. So when I went in they told me they were sorry but since we were from out of the city they couldn't help us but they told me to come to Del Norte, because they were sure they would help me right away because I had so many children. So when I came to them, she said "Oh, we're not running this office for drunks" and she couldn't help me.. She told me to go to my father-in-law and tell him to help me because that's his responsibility too, or tell your folks to help you. So I told her that my folks were already helping all they could but my father-in-law wouldn't help me. So anyway I had a hard time. I think they gave me two orders before he was released from jail because he got to the police and the police made him sign a note that he would pay the money and they let him out. They let him out and they couldn't do anything about it because the police weren't supposed to. Anyway, they let him out. But I had a hard time for them to help me then.

Adams: How did they make you feel when you went in? What did you feel like?

Mrs. Chavez: Sometimes, if it weren't that you were starving you wouldn't have gone because they talked to you like you were doing it on purpose.

Adams: Like you want to be that way? Is this changed now, or is it still this way?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, it seems to be a little bit better now. They don't treat you as bad as they used to, no. When my husband and I separated there were nine of us and they were giving twenty-five dollars a month in groceries, for nine of us. I went in and told them I don't know how they expect me to get along with twenty-five dollars for nine of us, because you know we could buy twenty-five dollars worth in a week for nine. This girl that works in the welfare office, she knew me before, and she said "I don't know why they are doing this to you, because there are other women that come in here and get help. I don't know why they are doing this to you. If I could do anything I would help you more because I know that you're not getting enough but I only keep the records." She said "There are only four of us in our family and we have to buy over thirty-five dollars in groceries a week. I don't know what more they want you to do." Because they had made me sign a complaint against my husband for insufficient non-support.

Adams: They made you sign a complaint?

Mrs. Chavez: They told me I had to do that before they could help me. About that time it was election time so Mr. Smith had won the election. They told me to go back again and they said in this case we can't help you because your husband is out. If he was in the pen or somewhere we could help you, but since he's out we don't know what we're going to do. So they told me to go back and see about the complaint. You know this girl told me "I don't know what they want you to do. You've done your part. You've signed complaints. It isn't your fault that they don't do anything about it." Anyway, they kept giving me twenty-five dollars a month for about eight months. Only twenty-five dollars worth of groceries, they didn't give me clothing or anything.

Adams: No clothing?

Mrs. Chavez: No. So my girl, she was a real good student too, she had to quit. And then the kids, they couldn't go this way, because sometimes I didn't know how to dress them.....

Adams: Is this when you quit school?

Mrs. Martinez: No, that was before.

Adams: You quit before. This was your other daughter?

Mrs. Chavez: My other daughter. And so they took me to court. They said I was neglecting my children, and I felt real bad about it. They told me if I didn't send them two months they were going to take them away from me. I got real scared because I wondered how I was neglecting them so I saw a lawyer and he told me that the welfare officials had taken all the rights from lawyers to defend a case but he said "In your case I wish I had a right because your kids are human. You can't send them all ragged to school just because Miss Jones tells you to. You go down to court, and you let me know, and then I can take over." So they told me that my kids hadn't gone to school. Mr. Rogers, you know they have an attorney; "Well", he said, "you're getting seventy-five dollars a month in groceries, that is enough for your family." I didn't tell him I was only getting twenty-five. But before that I had written to Denver about my kids. I had told them that I was only getting this twenty-five dollars in orders for food and my kids were in school. They needed clothing, and so they told me they were giving general assistance. I'd been living with my husband and he hadn't been able to find a job. That's what they were giving me. He says for the sake of your children they should give you enough to send them to school. The day of that court hearing they told her for two months they were going to see how the kids were and if there wasn't any change they were going to take them away from me. How am I going to change if they don't change and give me more? How do they expect me to improve? So anyway about two days later they sent me a letter. Oh, for about four months now they had increased it to fifty dollars, because I was getting ten dollars a week for two weeks and fifteen dollars for the other two. So when they sent me that letter they said that they were concerned about the welfare of my children and that they were going to take all the aid I was getting away from me. So I took that letter back to that lawyer and he said: "You let me have that letter. This will help you now so you could show them if you could do better for your kids or not." So he took that letter. I told him Mr. Rogers said it was seventy-five dollars I was getting, and he said I'm going to take those vouchers to the courthouse and see just why it is they're so opposed to helping those children and then they want you to do right and send them to school. I don't know what Mr. Smith did with my letter but anyway about a week later when I went in for my ten dollars for my aid they told me that they were so proud of the way that I had changed and there wasn't anything at all, because I couldn't have changed, because I was doing the same thing.

Adams: How did you feel then?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, I felt...well, I didn't feel proud. I wondered how the picture was changing.

Adams: Were you angry with them?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, I felt kind of angry because they had taken me to court and everything, and she said "Oh, Mrs. Chavez, the director's so proud and the judge and we're proud of you because of the change there has been in your children. And she said "Now next month we're going to increase your allotment. I wasn't even paying rent then. My brother had to lend me a room to live in.

Adams: He loaned you a room for how many people to live in?

Mrs. Chavez: There was about ten of them, and then I had mine, there was nine of us.

Adams: Nineteen people.

Mrs. Chavez: There were four rooms. I had two of the rooms, well, one compartment.

Adams: So there was really one room with a compartment in it. Where was your husband at this time?

Mrs. Chavez: Oh, he was out.

Adams: You mentioned this non-support charge. What happened on the non-support charge?

Mrs. Chavez: They never did anything about it.

Adams: Did they ever do anything to him at all?

Mrs. Chavez: Yes, about four years before this he had been in Canon City.

Adams: He was in Canon City in the prison? Do you remember this, Mrs. Martinez, when he went to prison? How old were you then?

Mrs. Martinez: I was about eighteen or nineteen.

Mrs. Chavez: You weren't married.

Mrs. Martinez: I was already married because I went to see him once in Canon City. You know when he's not drinking we feel sorry for him. At that time when he was in Canon City we felt sorry for him, but we knew that he deserved it more or less because the kids have to go through a lot of hardships because of him.

Adams: Why do you think he couldn't work? Why do you think he did drink like this?

Mrs. Martinez: He said that when he was little his mom died and he and his other brother, there were just the two of them, and then his father got married to this lady that had about seven of her own. My grandfather almost, well you could say that he threw them out of the house to get the seven of the other wife's in. So my dad and my uncle had to look for a place to go and he said that they were about eight or nine. Because when he got drunk he used to cry and say that his dad didn't love him, that he had abandoned him, and things like that. So maybe that had something to do, and so we used to tell him how come he felt so bad that his dad had done that to him and his brother and he was doing the same thing to his children, because his children were having to go through more hardships.

Adams: What did he say?

Mrs. Martinez: Oh, he used to say that he loved them and everything. Well, about two days ago he said that if I would sign for him to send him to that mental hospital in Pueblo so that they could cure his drinking that he wouldn't get mad.

Adams: He was asking for help?

Mrs. Martinez: Then I said they told us if you reported yourself to the State Hospital that it would be easier to get in there than if we signed. So I told him why don't you report yourself if you want to quit, because he said that he wanted to quit and he said "No, you do it, I can't, I just have you to look to for help." So he said if you'd go and sign for me, and I said if he wouldn't get mad, and he said he wouldn't get mad.

Adams: Are you going to?

Mrs. Martinez: I'm going to.

Adams: Because really in a way this is what he's asking for. He's asking for help and it may be hard for him to do it on his own. Even in that he needs support.

Mrs. Chavez: You know, I think the welfare isn't so bad now.

Adams: Since that experience that you had before. I was going to ask you, when you kept talking about getting letters you mean that was the way they did everything ? Did they send letters to you rather than come to see you?

Mrs. Chavez: I don't know, they just sent me that letter that time. They told me that for the sake of the welfare of my children that they were going to take my help away.

Adams: What were they basing this on? Did they come and visit you in the home or did they just do this from the fact that the kids didn't come to school?

Mrs. Chavez: No, I think what happened was that the truant officer, you know, see one day Tommy didn't have any shoes to go to school so I didn't send him. About three o'clock in the afternoon this man came. I don't know, some other kid must have made him mad, because he came over where Tommy was sitting and he said "Come on, they told me to take you to the office and see if they have a pair of shoes that would fit you." It was late for Tommy to go to school and Tommy says "Mom, I still wouldn't have to go because it's too late and the kids would all laugh at me." So I told Tommy

2

"Well, go ahead because if you get shoes today then you won't miss tomorrow." So Tommy was walking out and this man got up real mad. I guess somebody must have made him real angry because he got up and he said "You get on that pickup", and he grabbed him, and I told him "You don't have to scare him like that, it's bad enough for him to have to go and have somebody give him shoes without you treating him like that." He said, "Ah, I'm sick and tired of everybody having to do for you folks, you know, It's bad enough that we always are having to be giving you folks something." Helping us out, I guess he meant, and I told him "If somebody else has done something to you, don't take it out on Tommy because you haven't seen him all day today." So I got real scared.

Adams: You mean because you talked back to him you thought he was going to really get mad at you. Is that what you thought?

Mrs. Chavez: He was real angry, I don't know why. I told him that he'd better not touch Tommy. I was real worried because I said, "Well, what if he didn't take him to school and took him some other place." So I went to school. Tommy had a teacher who was real nice. I told her"You know why I came over here, because I was afraid he would hit him," and she said "He'd better not hit him, he's not supposed to." And I told her he was real angry.. I don't know why but he couldn't have proved that I was neglecting my kids or ever left them alone or anything.

Adams: So he was the one who reported you?

Mrs. Chavez: And then my brother in California told me "Why did you let him get away with that? Why didn't you make him prove that you neglected the kids, because he couldn't prove it," he said. "You don't neglect them, it isn't your fault if you aren't getting enough help for them to go to school. That's not neglect."

Adams: School is very important. Last time we talked a little bit about school. It was pretty rough to talk about. I wonder if we could talk about it again, about how far you got along in school.

Mrs. Martinez: I went to the sixth grade. My twin sister, we were always real slow, we didn't have any other brothers and sisters so if I didn't go to school one day she wouldn't go either. If she went to school she would stay in school crying because she missed me and I would stay home crying for her because I missed her, so both of us missed at the same time. At that time, we were eleven years old, when my mom had her other baby, and she was real sick. When she was about six months, she couldn't walk or anything.

Adams: You couldn't walk? Was this the baby you had with the midwife? Or did you have a doctor?

Mrs. Chavez: I had a doctor. But for about three months before I had her I was an invalid.

Mrs. Martinez: So we had to stay home and help her do the housework. She didn't have anybody to help her out, so we had to, and then next year when she was going to have the other one, one was a little baby and there was another one coming so we had to stay home and help her and the kids would make fun of us because we missed so much school. You know, they would say that we played hooky and so finally the teacher, I think she was the principal at that time of that school, she called us over and she said that since we didn't seem to like school and didn't go that we might as well quit, that it would be better for everybody concerned if we just quit. So next year we were supposed to have gone into the seventh grade, but we just quit. Since she had told us that, and we were needed at home, we just didn't go back at all.

Mrs. Chavez: Once Tommy was in third grade and he played hooky one day, and about two days later he played hooky again. So I went to his teacher and I told her that I had found out Tommy had played hooky and I didn't want him to do that because I didn't know what he could get into. The teacher was real nice to me and she said "Mrs. Chavez, you know of all the mothers of the boys that play hooky, you're the first one that has come down here to see me about your son." The principal came out and the teacher told her that I had come to see if Tommy was in school and she said "Well, that's your fault. You should know when they're in school and when they're not in school." "We didn't call her", she said, "Mrs. Chavez came on her own accord and I think that since she was interested enough in her sons to come and find out why that we should at least do our part to cooperate with her." And then one time the truant officer came to my house and he was real mad and he said "Mrs. Chavez, Tommy isn't in school, and it's your problem to know when you send him to school that he gets there,"and I told him "Well, I know it is but I've got different kids at home too and I can't leave these children alone while I go and see if Tommy got to school. I sent him to school. I told him to go, and I've told Tommy whenever he doesn't go to school to come home,"and he said "He's not at school and he's not at home either." He told me off real mad so I got real worried and wondered if he didn't go to school so I went over to her house and she said "I'm sure he went to school", because my sister-in-law's boys went with him and after a while I saw the truant officer coming back and he met me and he said "I'm sorry, but he did go to school."

Adams: He was there? How do you feel, both of you, when people like this get angry with you, what do you feel inside?

Mrs. Martinez : Well, I think you feel like they should at least try to see if they're right or wrong first.

Adams: In other words, they ought to be sure.

Mrs. Chavez: Yes, because this is kind of hard for somebody to come and talk to you that way.

Adams: Do you feel like you can stand up to them or how do you feel?

Mrs. Chavez: Sometimes you wish you could tell them something back or something.

Adams: You'd really like to say a few words back to them? But then the time that you did, you got so frightened because you were afraid they would take your kids away.

Mrs. Chavez: Well, like the welfare people would tell me, "Why don't you tell them to come and look at your house," even my son-in-law would tell me to go down there and tell them to come and look at my house, the way you don't have anything to eat or anything. They wouldn't do that, and then when you went to the office they just thought you were doing it to ask for something. I told them "I can't go in and make the papers out myself, and help myself, if they don't do it, I don't have any way of doing it to make them realize."

Adams: Have you always lived in Lariat?

Mrs. Martinez: Yes.

Adams: How do you feel that the people in Monte Vista feel about Lariat?

Mrs. Martinez: I don't know, I think that the townspeople think of Lariat as a place like... Well, when I say I live in Lariat I feel kind of ashamed, because I get a feeling that they don't think that anybody that lives in Lariat is good enough.

Mrs. Chavez: My son-in-law was in Denver and once when they asked him where he came from and he said, Lariat. They said "Only people that have lots of gut live there."

Adams: How do you mean that?

Mrs. Chavez: They said it was a real bad place, but it isn't so bad. Before we moved to Lariat from Antonito I cried all that day we were going to move to Lariat because they had already told me I was going to pass the tenth grade and it was the last month of school that I had to go so I cried all day. I wanted my dad to stay but he had already rented a house and everything. But we used to be scared because they told us on the ranch that here in Lariat men kidnapped girls and they found men hanging on telephone posts and there were murders. They did have about two murders there but it has changed a lot since we moved there.

Mrs. Martinez: When we first moved there, people, women and men would fight almost every night, but you don't see that any more. Things have changed a lot.

Adams: Do you feel that the people up here in Monte Vista realize it's changed or do they still think of it the old way?

Mrs. Chavez: I think they realize it's changed.

Adams: How are they showing that now?

Mrs. Martinez: I think the police look into it with more concern now. Once when we called the police, some man, I think the dispatcher, he said that, he's not the sheriff any more, but when he was the sheriff, he had told him that when somebody from Lariat called after eight o'clock at night to tell them he was in bed and not to bother him. If it's from Lariat, just tell them I'm in bed and don't want to be bothered. So if something happened we knew we couldn't find the police. But now we have two boys from Lariat as policemen.

Adams: You think that makes it better now. Does it help that two men from the community are on the police force?

Mrs. Chavez: We've got a lot of kids in Lariat. There could have been a lot more crime. Some of them get into trouble, but I don't think they're as bad as some people think. Since Reyes Ramos, the counselor, has been here, he's helped the kids a lot too. That's when my boy became interested in going back to school and a lot of the other boys too.

Adams: What is Tommy doing now?

Mrs. Chavez: He's at home now.

Adams: He went to Montrose last time, is that right? When I was here last time? How has he been these last few years?

Mrs. Chavez: I haven't had any trouble with him.

Adams: Does he seem more involved in things? Did he go back to school?

Mrs. Chavez: He went back to school. He dropped out for a few years, but he went back.

Adams: How did he get back in?

Mrs. Chavez: Reyes helped him.

Adams: Did he seem to like school better?

Mrs. Chavez: Yes, I had a note, I don't know if it was from his teacher or not, but she told me he had done real good.

Adams: How do the people in Lariat feel about the VISTAS?

Mrs. Chavez: Oh, they're real proud now. They're real happy. They feel so good that somebody is interested in doing that. We could have done it but I guess none of the Lariat folks ever thought of that.

Adams: When they said they wanted to come and help, did the men say that too, or just the women?

Mrs. Chavez: It was the kids, and the women.

Adams: The men didn't say too much? Why do you think the men didn't?

Mrs. Martinez: Well, to tell you the truth about the only man I see is my husband and he's always drinking. Most of the men are working.

Mrs. Chavez: You know there is a change, after being in the hospital, you asked if things are changed or not. Before a patient is released, only they forgot to give me that blank; maybe they'll mail it to me; because they are mailing some of them out, but each patient that is released; they bring them a blank to fill and in that blank they have to put how they were treated and what better things could be made and I think that here they heard they were asking about them and I think it's because the VISTAS are here.

Adams: You think that's why they asked these questions?

Mrs. Chavez: They really treated me nice.

Adams: In the hospital? Had you been in before?

Mrs. Chavez: Yes, twice.

Adams: How did they treat you then?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, seven years ago when I was there, there were two nurses that tried to make fun of the patients. One of the nurses wanted to change me to another ward and I told her I couldn't walk barefooted, I get cramps in my legs when I walk barefooted, and she turned around and said to the other one, "Lend her your shoes" making fun. But I told the doctor. Those nurses aren't there any more. They got rid of them.

Adams: This time you got much better reception?

Mrs. Chavez: They were all real nice.

Adams: When the young girls in Lariat grow up, what do they have to look forward to?

Mrs. Chavez: They haven't had anything to look forward to, but now I notice at the hospital they're taking applications for nurses' aides and they're going to give them training, and they told them while they were getting the training they weren't going to get paid but after they had learned they would get paid, and they needed a lot of nurses' aides.

Adams: They were actually taking applications while you were there? Will this be the first time that ever happened?

Mrs. Martinez: And they're giving the Spanish a chance to work like that. Before, I went once to put an application in as a nurses' aide and they didn't treat me too good. They didn't treat me too good so I never went back or anything. They give you the opinion you aren't good enough for that job, or something like that. If an Anglo would go and right away they'd let her know in a few days, but they didn't tell me nothing. It makes you embarrassed, and I never went back again. But this time they said that the Spanish were going to fill applications out and that they were treating them O.K.

Mrs. Chavez: This head nurse that I saw, she told this girl that applied, she was real happy, that we're going to need a whole lot of these girls and we're going to give them training.

Mrs. Martinez: All of you have come a long way. We're getting treated better by the English-speaking people.

Adams: You feel this is true? Why do you think this has happened?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, I think in the first place, before we were just set aside, and now they know that somebody is interested.

Adams: Did you feel you were far away and so different? Were there people in Monte Vista you could come and talk with and share your problems, or was it like there was a wall between you?

Mrs. Chavez: There were some people, like that teacher I talked to, one of them, but what we needed more was the welfare to be different. Even for the pension, I had to go through for my father-in-law when he was eligible for his pension. They kept telling him, well, he was seventy, and they told him he had to be here, I think it was thirty-five years in Colorado because he had come from New Mexico. So they kept putting him to work and so finally he couldn't work any more. He passed out in the fields when he was working. So they told me to go with him to a doctor and when we went we couldn't find that doctor so we went to another one and the doctor gave him a statement that he couldn't work any more, that he needed medical attention and he needed X-rays and things like that, so as soon as we came back the girl got real mad and said "How come you went to another doctor, you said this one was his doctor" and I told her his doctor wasn't here and so she said "Well, Mr. Chavez, I think you can file your application for old age pension now, that we have enough proof," and I told her "You had the proof all the time."

Adams: There was constant questioning of you?

Mrs. Chavez: I think what happened, they would have to give him medical care and it would cost them quite a bit so they figured they'd give him the pension and out of that he could pay for his own care.

Adams: Do you see many people moving in and out of Lariat?

Mrs. Chavez: They seem to stay.

Adams: How did Lariat come about in the first place?

Mrs. Chavez: I don't know, I remember when we moved here there were maybe ten houses in Lariat and they kept building more and more.

Adams: Did the people that moved in to work in the fields, had they been with the migrants?

Mrs. Chavez: I think mostly they had relatives here.

Mrs. Martinez: Like for potato harvest, a lot of workers came from New Mexico for potato harvest and then they'd stay, they liked the place, the town, like my husband. He came about sixteen years ago from New Mexico and when he went back he told them that there was a real nice place there so his folks came back with him and now my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law and all of them came. I guess that is mostly how a lot of people came.

Adams: They moved in and their relatives came too, with them. Does your husband know that you've been here to teach? What does he think of this?

Mrs. Martinez: Oh, he told me it was O.K. but not to talk so much. He says "You talk too much."

Adams: What is he like?

Mrs. Martinez: Well, you know, the kids get along O.K. with him, but the only problem that I have, if we had more money coming we could manage better. This way some days I feel like just leaving him and trying to live on welfare or getting a job myself, because he doesn't work too much. It's kind of hard to make ends meet. Then I have a real small house, just one room made into two, and since my dad is with us and there are eight of us. We're nine in two rooms, and the linoleum's all faded out and everything, so some days I feel like getting my children and going someplace to look for a bigger home; things like that.

Adams: Some days it's harder for you than others.

Mrs. Martinez: He's got a disadvantage, because he didn't go to school and he doesn't know how to read nor write, and he doesn't understand English. But when he has a chance to work, he works steady. Everybody that he works for says he's a real good worker, but since he can't read or write and can't understand English too good he says "I can't look for a better job."

Adams: If he could get in some kind of thing that would help him learn, do you think he would do this?

Mrs. Martinez: I think he would. Because I talked to the school nurse about three weeks ago and she told me that she was going to Del Norte to the welfare office and see if maybe they wouldn't have a place like my brother-in-law. He has heart trouble and they were getting welfare but then they sent him to rehabilitation and they gave him training as a mechanic and now he's working with a construction company as a mechanic and he's getting real good money there.

Adams: Your husband would be eligible for that, too, did you know that?

Mrs. Martinez: This lady said that she was going to ask and she said maybe they could help him out.

Adams: He would be. Did he go to school at all?

Mrs. Martinez: To the second grade.

Adams: To the second grade, and that was in New Mexico. Was this in one of the English-speaking schools or one of the Spanish?

Mrs. Martinez: Spanish.

Adams: It was in one of the small communities there?

Mrs. Martinez: He felt real angry at his father, because his father was more interested in having them help him out. They worked on a farm and my father-in-law told them it was more important for them to learn how to work than to go to school. So he never let them go to school. Now my children, he gets mad, even if we're so poor and everything. That's one of the things he wants for them, to go to school so even if they say that they want to miss for one reason or another he asks them why and everything, because he says "I don't want them to miss school without too much reason or they'll like staying home and they won't want to go." So he tries to encourage them. He can't talk English too good. Well, neither can I but at least I speak to my kids in English so that they'll understand so that when they start school they won't have to learn the language with everything else they have to learn in school.

Adams: They know both Spanish and English?

Mrs. Martinez: Yes, but they don't want to speak Spanish. They speak English.

Adams: What about when they talk with him?

Mrs. Martinez: No, just English. He can understand them a little, but not too much. But he doesn't mind it, he says "I don't care as long as they know how to speak."

Adams: So he wants them to speak English too.

Mrs. Martinez: He thinks it's important for them when they start school. And my mother-in-law can't talk English at all. She doesn't understand it, and my kids go and talk to her and she doesn't understand them and she gets mad at me. She says "Why don't you just let them speak Spanish?" It's their language." And my husband says "Oh, just don't pay attention, let them learn that language, it's more important to them to learn that language than Spanish."

Adams: So then, the fact that he does support them in wanting them to go to school and to learn, these are the things you see about him that make you feel like maybe you can hold on.

Mrs. Chavez: You know it's surprising now, when Tommy first started to school he didn't know how to speak English at all. We were raised on ranches so we always spoke in English but when we first moved here nobody knew how to speak English. They all spoke Spanish, and they thought it was real smart to learn how to speak English. And now all the little kids speak English. And when Tommy started to school he didn't understand at all.

Adams: So now when they come to school they'll all be better able to deal with things.

Mrs. Chavez: They know more English than Spanish.

Adams: The three of us could go on for hours, but I think we'll stop here, and instead of having a break we'll open it up now and all of you can start talking with us.

Question: Is there anyone from Lariat that you know of that is interested in Lariat's problems?

Mrs. Chavez: There are men that are working on this Anti-Poverty now, working with the VISTAS.

Adams: When you say that they're working with the Anti-Poverty, do they have an organization down there now, a group of men that meet?

Mrs. Chavez: I don't know if it's the same VISTA group but I know they have meetings I know the ones that belong to it. I think the first person that was interested in Lariat was Reyes.

Adams: What did people think at first, when Reyes came?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, right at the beginning some of the people that didn't have a way of sending their kids to school. They needed shoes or something. He'd help them, sometimes out of his own pocket, I think. So they started to see that he was interested in Lariat. And he used to have meetings for the dropout kids, because Tommy started going there. So I think he's done a lot.

Adams: Say none of this had ever happened now, we were not in Lariat. We hadn't come to Monte Vista, and we weren't doing the training here and you were living in Lariat and all of a sudden the VISTA volunteers came in from someplace out of nowhere. You didn't know where they came from. How would be the best way they could get to reach you to get you to trust them? What are the kinds of things they need to know? What should they do?

Mrs. Martinez: Well, I think if they're coming to our homes and they'd ask us questions on what they wanted to learn and what they wanted to know and we could answer and tell them.

Adams: Could they come and knock on the door and say "I'm from VISTA." Would that work?

Mrs. Martinez: It would in my house.

Adams: Could you think of a house it might not work? What would happen?

Mrs. Martinez: If they went to my mother-in-law, she would close the door. They would have problems in Lariat. Maybe some people would want to welcome them but they don't understand English, because I know that one of the VISTA workers that was here a while back, like the medical, asking about the health, I know he went to some of the houses and they closed the door because they didn't know what he wanted.

Adams: So you think if the VISTA didn't understand Spanish the best thing he could do when he came to a community would be to find someone who did speak English and was pretty well accepted and this person could help. What other kinds of things should they know? What should they know about getting people to accept them and coming to talk to people? What are some of the things they could do that would make you mad and you wouldn't want to see them any more?

Mrs. Martinez: If they show that they don't respect you, like me, I live in that small house and I feel kind of ashamed. If they went to my home and showed that they felt about the same way I think I wouldn't like for them to come.

Adams: You mean if they made you feel that you were inferior and made you humiliated like you've described in other relationships with people, how would you know that they were feeling this way?

Mrs. Martinez: I guess by the way they looked at you or talked to you. I think if the people expected them and one of them knocked on the door and they know what it was about, I think they'd welcome him.

Adams: One thing you would caution them against is coming in and reinforcing some of the unpleasant feelings that you already have.

Mrs. Chavez: Some of them have gone, the first group went, and some from the second group went to my home and so far all of them have been real nice. I'd like for them to come again. I don't mind, all of them have been real nice. They don't treat you different or anything. For my part I don't mind if they go.

Adams: Do you know anyone down in Lariat who might have the feeling that maybe the VISTAS shouldn't be here or people shouldn't come in from the outside?

Mrs. Martinez: Well, my mother-in-law was against it. The last time, when I was telling her about the doctor, you know, that he told me off, and I couldn't tell him anything back because I just started to cry because he told me so many things. I think if he could have hit me he would have because he was so mad. But the two nurses that were coming this winter they helped a lot. They went in for about half an hour and talked to the doctor before my turn to go in with my boy, and I think they told him because he wouldn't have known a lot of things he told me unless they had told him. My husband was real mad, and when I came from the clinic and told him the doctor had told me off, he said "That's what you get for trusting people and letting them come in to see how we live, and they go and tell them, and maybe that's why because they see the way you live and everything."

Adams: Do they seem to blame you for the way you live? Is that what youre talking about?

Mrs. Martinez: Well, I guess they do, like that doctor, he said that my children weren't his responsibility, he said "They're your responsibility. You're the one that's supposed to take care of them, not me. You can't expect to bring this boy over here and want me to do everything for him without you doing your part." Things like that. Then they give you this feeling that you don't care about your children because you live in those conditions. This makes you feel kind of bad, because it's not true.

Adams: Do you feel that you would be better able to stand up for yourself? If this doctor were to give you a bad time now, would you be better able to stand up to him?

Mrs. Martinez: I don't know, I have to go the 19th. I am going to take my mom along.

Adams: You're going to take your mother along? I think that's a good idea. If you had your wish, some small wish about something you could get, what would you want?

Mrs. Martinez: For my part, I'd want a better home, a bigger one and a better one than the one I have, and then to have enough clothes and food for my children, that would be about it.

Mrs. Chavez: I do have a home because my brother left me that home, but it isn't mine, it is in his name, he pays the taxes on it. He told me I could live there. I do pay twenty-five dollars rent, but sometimes like I told the welfare people, I send him the twenty-five dollars and he goes and sends all my children shoes, or sometimes he sends me money back to help me. I wish in some way, always we have so much drinking....

Adams: You wish there could be more quiet.

Mrs. Chavez: When we first moved here, we women that had husbands that drank, we used to be real glad when Saturday and Sunday came so they couldnt buy it, but then they started bootlegging so it was worse then. Now even if you go to the sheriff and give him the names of the businesses that sell wine on holidays when the liquor stores are closed and on Sundays. You give them the names and they say it's none of their business.

Adams: They don't do anything for you?

Mrs. Chavez: When I first moved into Lariat and my husband started drinking so bad and they used to get in fights. It was just awful and so I wrote to the Internal Revenue in Denver and told them they were bootlegging but they never did anything about it.

Adams: Nothing ever came of it? Mrs. Martinez said something a few minutes ago that I think we might want to talk a little bit about, because we get into a lot of college lectures about this subject. I don't think we know what we're talking about most of the time. This is the subject of self-concept, you know, how you feel about yourself. A number of times you have mentioned certain ways that you felt. Shall we talk a little bit about that?

Mrs. Martinez: Well, I live in that little house. It's real run-down and everything and a lady told me once how come I lived like that. She said "I think it's your fault. Maybe if you tried a little harder you could get a job or make your husband build a bigger home," and maybe that's why I feel a little embarrassed.

Adams: Does this feeling of embarrassment seem to follow you all the time, or is it something you can get over at periods?

Mrs. Martinez: Sometimes I feel like that and sometimes I don't.

Adams: Do you think the way you feel sometimes affects the way you do things? Like sometimes the feeling might make you a little bit depressed like you were saying? Can you talk a little bit about that?

Mrs. Martinez: I don't know. Some days when I get up, because I have to have cardboard boxes to put the kids clothes in. I have one cardboard box for one of the children's clothes and then another, and then some big trunks to put their biggest clothes in. When they dress up in the morning they take out the boxes and everything is a mess, so I feel so depressed I just can't stay there and I go down to my mom's or my other sister's and we get around to talking and it goes away and I come home and I feel up to doing my housework. I do my housework and everything and I feel O.K. Sometimes I feel like that, but not always.

Adams: When you were a little girl, did you feel this way sometimes?

Mrs. Martinez: I don't think so. My sister and I were always together. We used to have a lot of fun, a lot of friends. I tell her we were lucky because we had each other.

Adams: Do your own children sometimes feel depressed?

Mrs. Martinez: My oldest is thirteen. She gets along with everybody, but they ask her where she lives so they can come over and visit her and she tells me that she's ashamed to tell them where she lives because of the house so she says she doesn't want to tell them, she just says "Over there someplace" but she doesn't tell them where, because she's embarrassed. And they stay at their grandma's, it's a new house, my brother-in-law built this new house, they started it about two years ago but they just moved in about six months ago. It's got three bedrooms and a hall and a living-room and a kitchen. It's nice, and my two girls sleep with their grandma because we don't have enough room in our house. Sometimes she says "I feel like telling them that my grandma's home is mine because hers is a better one."

Adams: How do you help them get over this sad feeling? How do you know that they're sad and how do you help them not be sad?

Mrs. Martinez: I talk to them. I say let's go buy an ice cream cone, or I ride around because I drive the pickup all the time, so I take them for a ride. You know, we talk to each other.

Adams: You and your daughter, you talk quite a bit?

Mrs. Martinez: My other girl, she's nine, but she doesn't care too much about the house yet, so it's not too bad with her. But my big girl, I talk to her and I tell her: "Oh, I feel the same way, but at least we have hope of somebody trying to help us. Before we never had hope of getting out of here but now that they're coming we can know that they're trying to help us so maybe someday you'll have a better life than we did."

Adams: When you said that when you were young you had your sister and the two of you were close and therefore a lot of this you didn't feel because each of you sort of took care of the other, when you had problems then did you have someone, could you go to your mom like Virginia goes to you? What did she used to talk to you about?

Mrs. Chavez: They used to tell me about how they were doing in school, who their friends were. I always used to warn them to take care of themselves and things like that. They used to obey me more than their father. One Sunday I remember I told them not to go someplace. They used to obey me. My husband he was drunk and he said "You go on." They did go. That hurt me a lot. When they got home they were real sorry about it. I always obeyed my folks as best I could. They were religious.

Adams: Why do you think you did?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, I had my mother and dad. They were a big help, my family was on my side.

Adams: You had that kind of support.

Mrs. Chavez: Well, my family said there are a lot of women who have husbands that turn out like that, you know, they drink too much, and we're proud of the way you are raising them all by yourself.

Adams: Why do you think that some of the women give up?

Mrs. Chavez: I guess they don't try hard enough.

Adams: You think it may be, you say the thing that made the most difference to you was your mother and father. What were they like?

Mrs. Chavez: They were always a good example. My dad always told me no matter what happened not to start to drink or anything like that. Because a lot of people told me "Your husband stays out late and drinks, why don't you do the same?" I am glad I never did it. I wouldn't have the respect of my parents.

Adams: What was you dad like? What did he do?

Mrs. Chavez: He was a sheepherder, common laborer, when we lived out in Antonito he had charge of a ranch there. There was a small community there. We used to have school up to the ninth grade, two grades in each room, and you didn't have to buy books or anything.

Adams: Did you ever go out to work with him when you were little?

Mrs. Chavez: We used to herd sheep.

Adams: You used to herd sheep? How did you like that?

Mrs. Chavez: Oh, we enjoyed it, my sister and I would go out together. And we used to help him pull weeds and milk cows.

Adams: Did your mother die first?

Mrs. Chavez: Yes.

Adams: And your father died just recently then? Did he work right up to the end?

Mrs. Chavez: No, he was getting the pension.

Adams: The old-age pension?

Mrs. Martinez: He was more a father to us than our own father, my grandfather, because he didn't drink nor anything and he used to boy us shoes or clothes. Even when we were married and we didn't have good shoes or good clothes he would go and buy us some out of his pension or our kids. He would help us with them. When we were small he would take us to church. He was more of a father to us than our own dad.

Adams: When you said that your parents were religious and that this meant a lot, in what way did it help you? In what way was it important to you?

Mrs. Chavez: I think the most important thing was because they were always wanting to do right, helping us. He'd take the kids to his house when my husband was real drunk. Sometimes when the mother and father are both drunk they don't even know where the father and mother are and all the kids scatter out. I didn't have to worry about my kids.

Adams: This makes you feel pretty safe and secure inside when you can count on him. What do you think your seventeen year old girl will do? Will she stay here in the valley or go somewhere else? What will her future be like?

Mrs. Chavez: She talks about she would like to be a nurse or a teacher. She's really interested in school.

Adams: To be a nurse or teacher would mean she'd have to get more education. She'd have to go on.

Mrs. Chavez: One of the men who was here gave her his name and address, from Texas and he told her that if she really wanted to become a librarian that he'd help her.

Adams: He's the chairman of the Sociology Department at Texas Western, is that the one, in El Paso? Do you think she'll write to him?

Mrs. Chavez: I think she will. I don't think I could give them a higher education because I'm on welfare. I couldn't do it.

Adams: Does it seem to be harder for the girls to live there than for the boys?

Mrs. Chavez: No, I think it's harder for a boy.

Adams: Why is that?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, the girls can stay home, they can do things around the house, or cook. I think it's harder for the boys. They don't hang around the house like the girls. About all they can do is go swimming or fishing or hunting.

Adams: Do you feel this way, or do you think it's harder for the girls?

Mrs. Martinez: No, I think it's harder for the boys. A lot of boys get together and they say "Let's go find some beer," or something like that, and if one doesn't drink they make fun of him.

Mrs. Chavez: My brother-in-law in California promised Tommy to take him there, but he got sick. Tommy wants to go there.

Adams: Do the boys seem to want to get out more than the girls? Do they feel that they want to get away from the valley more than the girls do?

Mrs. Chavez: My girls have all had a chance to get out. Two of my girls moved to California at different times. And one of my girls is staying in Montrose with my sister now for about a month. Tommy is the one who has to wait, not my girls.

Adams: Do you want to talk a little bit about the difference between the summers here and the winters?

Mrs. Chavez: It starts getting a little cold after it freezes, some time in October, and it starts getting colder and colder but it doesn't really get cold until November, then December, January, February, this weather we have till about May, or June. In the wintertime the kids have to walk to school and it's hard for the big ones to have to walk a long way to high school. The little kids have to walk through the snow. It's real hard for them to have to walk so far to school. And the water, it's hard if you don't have a well. A lot of us don't. It gets hard on us to have to chop wood and buy coal.

Adams: How do you heat your homes? What do you use?

Mrs. Chavez: I have a stove that's wood and coal. For the wintertime I have a kerosene burner, oil heat.

Adams: Does it get the room warm?

Mrs. Chavez: Just one room. I have it in my room, so in the morning when we all get up I can't get the kitchen warm enough for the kids to come and to eat breakfast.

Adams: Do they ever talk about the cold?

Mrs. Chavez: They don't like the winter.

Adams: When they talk about the winters, what do they say?

Mrs. Chavez: What they say most is that they should have school in summer, so that in winter they wouldn't have to go, because of the cold.

Adams: How long does it take them to walk from your house to school?

Mrs. Chavez: About twenty minutes, and if they walk slowly, about half an hour.

Adams: Do they get warm food at school?

Mrs. Chavez: No. They have to walk back and forth at noon.

Adams: So they go twice then?

Mrs. Chavez: But when it got too cold I asked if they had to walk two times in the cold.

Adams: That was your young kids? What about the high school?

Mrs. Chavez: No. Well, I have a girl that works, she gets free lunch, the others have to walk home.

Adams: They have to walk. There's no school lunch program in the high school?

Mrs. Chavez: There is, but they have to pay $1.50 a week. We can afford it sometimes but not always.

Adams: Do your children get hot lunches?

Mrs. Martinez: Because my husband works in the winter time more steady than in the summer so I used to give them money to eat in school. About two months before school ended I didn't have any money to give them to buy their lunch so I sent a note and I told them if they could have free lunch, and they gave them free lunch till the end of school. But Virginia, when I had the money to give her she could eat in high school. Then at the end when I didn't have any money because the cellars had closed, she had to walk home.

Adams: When you say that the men work in the cellars, what does that mean? What do they do?

Mrs. Martinez: They have different kinds of jobs. Some of them empty the sacks and pick them up from the floor and weigh them, mostly sorting them. They have women there to sort the potatoes and then the men have to, when the sacks get full, take them out of there, pile them up...

Adams: Is that about the only kind of job you can get around here in the winter?

Mrs. Martinez: Mostly, unless you are a construction worker.

Adams: Do the children seem to have colds a lot in the winter?

Mrs. Martinez: We pile them up with sweaters. We put on a whole bunch of sweaters, sometimes two pair of pants. We have this outside pump, and they freeze. Even some of our neighbors that have water in the house, their pipes freeze so we have to find some way of heating the water, because not all the wells freeze.

Mrs. Chavez: That's what caused my father-in-law's death. The well froze and me made a fire inside a little house and he got smoke up his lungs and I don't know what happened. He didn't die then but he began to feel sick and we took him to the doctor and he said that had caused it. That had brought on his sickness and he had inhaled too much smoke, since he was so old, he said that his lungs couldn't take it.

Mrs. Martinez: You have to wait sometimes three days for the clothes to dry and the stove that we have makes so much smoke so we can't take the clothes inside to dry because of the soot from the stove. When we put them by the fire it smokes a lot.

Adams: How do you get your fire started in the morning?

Mrs. Martinez: I use paper, boxes, or kerosene, coal oil.

Adams: You put a little of that on your fires to get them started?

Mrs. Chavez: First I put some cardboard, a little bit of wood, and light a match, and you hope it lights.

Mrs. Martinez: I use coal oil.

Adams: That's a little dangerous, isn't it?

Mrs. Chavez: I used to use it until my sister got burned once. I had it in a coal oil can and one of the girls was going to light the fire and it blew out the whole bottom of it when she got near the stove.

Adams: But she put the fire out? Did any of your kids ever drink coal oil by mistake. Thinking it was water?

Mrs. Chavez: My little grandson, he did.

Adams: What did you do to help when that happened?

Mrs. Chavez: Well, he was kind of choking so we gave him some warm water, he could get pneumonia.

Adams: There are so many things you have to worry about like that, aren't there? How do they feel about not having any chance to be alone, to have no privacy?

Mrs. Chavez: I have two boys. Tommy has to wait. We have four rooms but in the winter we go in one room in the morning and he has to wait until all the girls are gone. He wouldn't get up, and their friends come in the morning to pick them up and he gets real mad sometimes and sometimes the girls want to dress and they say "We don't want to dress when Tommy's there."

Adams: Are your children beginning to feel this now?

Mrs. Martinez: Virginia, she goes to her grandma's to get dressed because my sister-in-law and my mother-in-law live in a house by themselves. Since my girl goes to sleep over there she takes some of her clothes there and gets dressed to have a little bit of privacy because otherwise she can't.

Adams: When you were growing up, did you have a chance to have any privacy, or not?

Mrs. Martinez: Well, I think we had more than my daughters have, because at the time my brothers and sisters were real small and it wasn't so hard.

Adams: Who gets up first in the morning?

Mrs. Martinez: At home I do. Our husbands don't like to chop wood, so we have to get up and chop wood and they say that because they work so hard it's up to us to chop wood, but not all the husbands feel that way. Just some of them. So I have to get up and chop wood and make the fire in the stove and bring some water and start the day. It's kind of hard, especially in the winter when it's cold. In the summer you don't mind it too much.

Adams: Summer's a lot better for you, then. Do you think you feel better, do you not get as depressed in the summer, does the winter sort of add to this?

Mrs. Martinez: I like winter because my kids go to school and then when I stay home I clean up the house and everything and I don't feel so depressed in winter as in summer. Because in summer when I look outside it's so sunny and real pretty and then inside the house is so dark and gloomy and I feel worse. I tell my sister sometimes "In summer it's worse because you wish that your home wouldn't be like this, that you could enjoy the day, but in summer you can't even enjoy it because you look at your house and it's so messy and everything." In the winter I don't feel like that, so depressed.

Adams: In the winter it's dark outside too.

Mrs. Chavez: My brother came from California in January, it was real cold then, he was always going to bring his kids in the wintertime so they could see the snow here, they had never seen snow, they wanted to come and see it, so he promised he was going to bring them in the wintertime, but now that he was here, he said "I'm going to tell the kids I'm going to break that promise, because I won't bring them here to freeze. It's so cold here I won't bring them any more." And my niece came, she's married and has a little boy and it was snowing one day, and he just stayed at the window watching the snow.

Adams: To see it once in a while is all right, but to live in it and to deal with it is something else.

Mrs. Chavez: My brother said "I didn't realize it was so cold here."

Adams: How did you find out two weeks ago that you were ill, that you had to go to the hospital?

Mrs. Chavez: When my dad started getting sick in April last year, they gave him at the hospital a test for sugar diabetes, he didn't have it too bad, I told the girls I had it, but I didn't go to the doctor.

Adams: You knew it back then?

Mrs. Chavez: A lot of people have diabetes. I guess they feel different. A few years ago the doctor told me he didn't want to alarm me but my blood pressure was real high too, so he gave me a prescription but it was during the winter and I couldn't buy the pills, because bills get higher, more fuel, anyway it costs more in the wintertime, so I couldn't buy the medicine.

Adams: You had a prescription to get it but you couldn't fill it?

Mrs. Chavez: Anyway I started getting real bad in my stomach, well, I wasn't dizzy all the time, but sometimes I would get real dizzy. Mostly it was my stomach, I felt real weak, so when I went to the doctor I told him I thought I had diabetes and he sent me to the hospital.

Adams: Do you think this helped you, being in the hospital?

Mrs. Chavez: It helped me, because I don't feel that way at all now.

Adams: Not even right this minute? You're not tired?

Mrs. Chavez: I don't feel bad at all. At least if I had pain I could go to the doctor and tell him I have a pain, but this feeling in my stomach was real weak.....

Adams: So that's what you meant when you came in this afternoon and said "I feel better this time than I did the first time."

Mrs. Martinez: She has to give herself insulin.

Mrs. Chavez: He tried to get me to the hospital to have it X-rayed. I have to take the insulin shot and I have to take the high blood pressure tablet.

Adams: Does this happen to you often that you go to doctors and get prescriptions but you don't have the money to fill them?

Mrs. Martinez: I don't know how long ago. I took my little girl to the hospital, she's been having trouble with her ears. They get infected. I took her to the doctor and I paid the doctor bill but I didn't have enough for the prescription, so I never got it filled. Then I went myself, he said I had an infected ovary, and he gave me some prescriptions, but I never got them, because I didn't have the money.

Adams: So in a way you just find out what's wrong with you but you don't get anything to take care of it. How do you think that could be changed?

Mrs. Martinez: Oh, like in Denver, they have Colorado General and if you go there and you need some medicine they don't charge you so much for it. It's according to your income.

Adams: You don't have that here? You don't have a clinic or anything to go to?

Mrs. Chavez: I guess I'm lucky because I'm on welfare. When I was in the hospital I had an electrocardiogram on my heart and I had an X-ray.

Adams: Did they discuss your EEK with you?

Mrs. Martinez: But I think if they had a clinic like that it would help a lot.

Mrs. Chavez: Because there was this woman from San Luis. She was in there when I was and she said they had a nurse and whenever anyone was ill they called her and if she found out they needed to go to the hospital she'd talk to a doctor. She said if she found out they needed to go to the hospital she'd talk to a doctor. She said it helped a lot having a visiting nurse.

Mrs. Martinez: Well we have this Catholic nurse. Just last year I got to know them. They come to our house. My boy had an infected tooth. He had a real big bump on his tooth and I didn't have the money to pay to take him to the dentist, so they told me to take him and they would pay so they paid for him. He had to have two of his molars taken out and they paid the doctor for me when I was sick that time. They told me to go and that they would pay and then he gave me some prescriptions but I didn't have the money for the prescriptions.

Mrs. Chavez: When my twins were small, during the war, we had a county doctor that would come to our home. I think they should have a county doctor, a doctor that would come to your home....

Mrs. Martinez: Or somebody that you could go to. If you feel sick, you could go to him and he would see you almost right away, but here if you feel sick, like me, I had a pain in my back the other day and it was so bad that I told Juanita to make me an appointment and she had it made since last week so it's for this Saturday and I don't feel that pain so bad any more. You know, by the time I have to go to the doctor I won't be feeling that bad.

Adams: You can't just go in and get it taken care of right away?

Mrs. Martinez: You have to make an appointment. If they had a doctor that would see you right away after you felt sick, or would check you or something, but by the time you make an appointment it's over, maybe. In Alamosa there's a doctor like that, you can go in if you feel bad so a lot of people from here have to go to Alamosa. Even if they're real sick, they have to go because over here they won't see them and if they go to Alamosa that doctor will see them right away. It's easier to go over there than over here.

Adams: What kind of food do you buy and prepare?

Mrs. Martinez: The basic food for us is beans and potatoes. We hardly ever get a chance to get fruit, things that we really need. We can't have milk every day for the kids. We know it's important, but we can't.

Adams: You buy mostly the essential foods.

Mrs. Martinez: We buy flour by fifty or twenty-five pounds for tortillas. That lasts us for about two weeks. We know our kids need fruit but we can't get them all the time.

Adams: Do you ever have any meats of any kind?

Mrs. Chavez: At first when I get my check I try to buy meat, but it lasts for about a week. When my kids were small they told me that they needed milk, and I told them that we couldn't afford it. They said "Your kids need vitamins and milk" and so I told her we couldn't afford to have them and she said to give them dry milk.

Mrs. Martinez: When I can afford to I buy some vitamins for my kids.

Adams: You have to cook for quite a few people too. Each of you prepares meals for quite a few. It's great to come back after six weeks and teach with you again. I particularly feel proud of you. I bet you're tired, Mrs. Chavez. You just got out of the hospital at 11:30 this morning, but you came to teach. I thought you were great, both of you. Thanks very much for coming to teach for us today.

THE
MONTE VISTA
STORY

INSTITUTE OF
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

REPORT NUMBER 411965-A